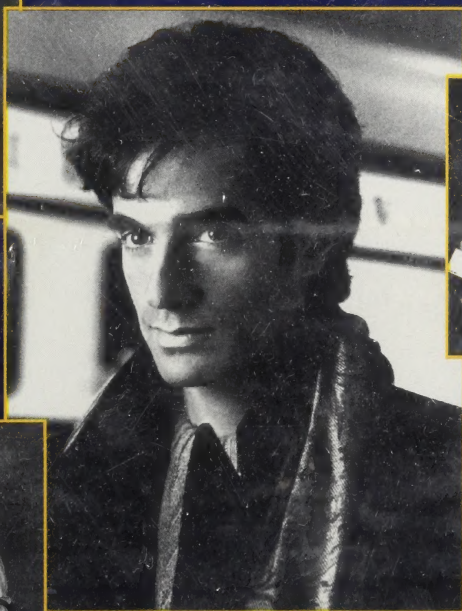


# ALL THE SECRETS OF MAGIC *Revealed*



THE TRICKS AND ILLUSIONS OF  
THE WORLD'S GREATEST  
MAGICIANS

*Contains 30 Full-Page Original Pen and Ink  
Illustrations Exposing the Tricksters' Secrets*

By

Herbert L. Becker

THE GREAT KARDEEN

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ALL  
THE SECRETS  
OF MAGIC  
*Revealed*





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THE TRICKS AND ILLUSIONS OF THE  
WORLD'S GREATEST MAGICIANS

By  
Herbert L. Becker



**LIFETIME BOOKS, INC.**

2131 Hollywood Blvd., Suite 305  
Hollywood, FL 33020

# All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

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# A Special Message from the Publisher

Lifetime Books is pleased to present an additional chapter to the readers of ALL THE SECRETS OF MAGIC, David Copperfield's therapeutic magic tricks. Mr. Copperfield has been gracious enough to provide the publisher with several tricks that he uses in hospitals. We appreciate the opportunity to bring these to our readers.

David Copperfield's chapter is filled with a candid biography of the legendary performer and the magic secrets offered through his unique, worldwide program, Project Magic.

We recommend our readers witness David Copperfield perform his famous illusions live on tour and on his television specials, to experience his unique, intense showmanship as he makes the Statue of Liberty disappear, walks through the Great Wall of China, flies through the air and makes an airplane vanish.

David Copperfield has been magnanimous in allowing us to feature highlights from Project Magic. He wants his millions of supporters to share in the secrets of this special program.

Good reading,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Donald L. Lessne". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Donald" being the most prominent part.

Donald L. Lessne  
Publisher



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# Foreword

Many magicians, professional, semiprofessional, amateur and even the occasional magician, have asked me not to publish this book. They feel that the great magic secrets should be kept as they are, a secret. Many feel that magicians will lose their edge if anyone can pick up this book and find out how a trick is done.

Sure, there are literally hundreds of books on magic available in every library and bookstore throughout the world. Anyone who has seen these books can tell you these contain nice-to-know tricks. But how about the big illusions? The current illusions are not so easy to have access to, because magic manufacturers do not want the general magic population to be able to go out and make the tricks on their own. The manufacturers want to be the sole suppliers.

When I began performing magic many years ago, under the name Kardeen, I also wanted to be able to perform the better tricks. But, alas, a ten-year-old boy can't get the instructions to the one thousand- and up to ten-thousand-dollar illusions. Consequently, I was forced to use the tricks every other young magician was using. How boring. Just imagine if I could have performed the Zigzag or Walking Through a Brick Wall when I was ten. Now that would have been something. But there was no way I could have the secrets to these great illusions.

It is because of this code of magicians that I have decided to put the secrets of the greatest tricks into this book. I truly feel that it is not the trick but the presentation which makes for great magic. How many times have we seen the same movie or television show, but we still enjoy it, even though we know just how the ending is going to turn out. It is the enjoyment of the show, it is the presentation which pleases us.

Presentation is the secret of magic, not the mechanics of the illusion. Any of the childhood books I read spoke only of tricks, of mechanisms that work in a special or sneaky manner. Before I knew what had happened, I began to create a

## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

show around the tricks. It is the show which separates a magician from a performer. I like to think of myself as a performer who happens to do magic, rather than a magician.

In putting this book together, I have tried not to leave out anything which would handicap the persons reading the effects and their individual instructions. Don't be afraid to add your own signature to everything you do. Make the effect yours and make it a great performance.

As you read about the famous magicians, keep one thing in mind: They all started out as you have. As youngsters, they struggled with the challenge of fooling others. Those few performers who have been successful have battled the ignorance of booking agents and talent management companies who still classify magic as a variety act. It is all right for the late night talk shows to have five comedians on in a night, but never do they have more than one magician per month. They don't see magic for the talent that it is. It takes little skill to tell jokes or sing a song, but it takes years of practice and a lot of money to perform the great illusions.

Many magic performers get so turned off by the agency and management route that they begin to book and manage themselves. In fact, I would guess that ninety nine percent of magic performers are self-managed and booked. This, unfortunately, can be the kiss of death to performers. Singers sing, dancers dance, magicians perform. Managers manage.

As you will read in the introduction, if you can really do magic well, then concentrate on magic and leave the managing to others. In the beginning, self-management may be the only way to go. At some point I hope you will be able to have real management. If you are very lucky, you may become so skilled in self-management that using anyone else is a moot subject, although most people have trouble managing themselves. Either way, work very hard on your act and presentation and put management on the back burner. Yes, it is going to be very hard to find an agency which will represent you, but don't give up. Let them know how good you can be for their agency.

The reality in making it in show business, which is what we magicians do, is having the right team around you. That



makes a world of difference. Work on your act and work even harder on finding management.

As you read this book, try to understand that magic is a performing art, and when you perform, perform with all your heart. It's just that simple.

A reminder: The instructions and secrets for the tricks in this book should not be construed as the only way of performing the tricks. There are as many ways to perform these tricks as there are magicians to perform them. I have given you the secrets as I personally know them, or as I have personally performed them.

Enjoy!

Herbert L. Becker

Note: Herbert L. Becker performed as The Great Kardeen.

## Acknowledgments

This book would not be complete without help and guidance from many people. The following are just some of those I'd like to take this opportunity to thank:

David Copperfield, Gary Ouellet, David Bohem of Sterling Publishing, Bozo the Clown, Gene Wright, Guinness Book of World Records, Sid Lorraine, John and Sally Paolucci, Johnny Carson, Lorraine Becker, Randi, Adam, Brian and Jessa.

In fond memory of Burling Volta Hull and Walter Gibson.

A special thanks to editors David Kohn and Brian Feinblum, illustrator Joann Carrera and the supportive staff at Lifetime Books. Publisher Don Lessne also deserves credit for having the vision to publish this book.

Thanks to all and to the many I do not have space to include.

Your help and guidance, along the way, have brought me to this special stop on my journey of life.

*To Shelly*

Thank you for your encouragement,  
your love and your friendship.  
It is owing to your inspiration  
that this book has come to be.





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# Introduction

You have taken your first step into understanding the world of magic and illusion. Within the pages of this book are the deepest secrets of modern magic. No doubt you are curious and want to jump ahead and read about your favorite tricks. Before you do, though, there are a few things you should know. The illusions are listed under the magician who made them an important part of his act. For example, most magicians performed the Linking Rings, but neither as memorably nor as effectively as the performer listed in this book.

Most of the illusions in this book are of the grand stage type, which are performed on a large stage by the very top magicians. Some of the tricks, such as Houdini's Pea Shell Game, are in the close-up or parlor magic category. No matter what size the stage, developing that trick still took a lot of creativity.

Performing it, however, requires individuality. Most of the illusions have been performed by the author using these methods, and he does not intend to give away the secrets of the performer. Because magic normally is not copyrighted or patented, an illusion can have many answers to its secrets. Like any song, an illusion can be redone in a manner that is yours alone, in a way that someone else could not or would not perform. Each magician has a special and unique way of creating the secret to any particular illusion. This book shows only one of many ways to perform each trick.

When I was a young man, Burling Volta Hull taught me to understand that a wide variety of answers exist for the riddle each illusion presents. Hull, a master magician, created and crafted some of the best magic of all time, and he taught me to perfect my own magic. He was friend to Houdini, Dunninger, Thurston, Blackstone, and many others, and I spent hours rummaging through his trunks full of tricks. Hull once showed me ten different ways to do just one of his illusions. Astonishingly, each variation produced the same outcome.

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In fact, most of the illusions in this book have been performed by thousands of magicians, millions of times, all over the world. Yet people still flock to see their favorite magicians performing those same tricks, no matter how familiar they may be.

For those of you who want to be magicians, that means the world's greatest illusions can be yours, because you can redo them in a manner as unique as your fingerprint. Putting your own stamp on a trick is not done in an afternoon, though. First you have to study it until you know everything about it, as though it were as much a part of you as your right hand. You must know the trick inside and out. Then you can give it your personal, unique twist.

Burling enjoyed fooling other magicians. He liked to leave others scrambling to understand how he performed his miracles. Today though, I feel that many magicians are so busy trying to fool each other, they forget how to fool the audience. You must continue to work toward fooling the public and not get too caught up in tricking other magicians. When an illusion gets too complicated or cumbersome, you may end up losing your audience. If that happens, you might as well find another line of work.

Even the simplest of tricks, such as the French Drop, still will fool the general public when done with class. I recently performed it on television, and the host was so impressed he begged me to do it again. I chose not to and left him and the television audience wanting more. The French Drop is a sleight-of-hand move, where a magician vanishes a coin or other small object. The magician shows a coin in one hand, then seemingly removes it by the other hand. Then the coin invisibly and magically travels back to the original hand, or behind the ear of a spectator, usually someone seated near the performer. I have performed this trick thousands of times over the past twenty years and I still love the reaction I get from people.

For example, when I first began doing the straitjacket escape (see chapter on Kardeen), I did it the same way every other magician did. It was a slow escape, so I decided instead to do it quickly, so quickly that it became a new feat for which

I became famous. Soon I was seen all over the world doing the straitjacket escape. With audiences responding so well to my particular way of performing this feat, many other magicians bought a straitjacket and started copying my method. To this day, magicians still come up to me and boast that they can do this escape faster than I can. Even so, no other magician approached my fame for this particular trick.

Why? I was able to make this trick my own. It somehow suited my personality—and putting your personality into your performance is the real secret to magic. The performers who brag that they can do the straitjacket escape faster than I can miss the point. Magic is not a contest, it is a performance, and it is the performance that counts.

Doug Henning proved that fact. Many magicians had performed the Zigzag before he did. When Doug performed this feat, the world took notice because he performed it with a flair nobody else had brought to it. When television star, comedian and magician Harry Anderson fools someone with a trick, he does it using a joke or a quip. Often the trick itself is not funny, but Harry Anderson is. That's his style. David Copperfield has another approach. He will add great showmanship to even the smallest parlor trick, just as he does with the grand stage illusions so many people love to see him perform.

The audience can spot magicians who haven't learned to make a trick their own and to put their personality into it. Those performers often are the ones who buy a new trick, then parrot word for word the script that came along with it. Even to a non-magician, the words sound strained because they are not part of the performer's personality. They are someone else's words. If you are going to be a magician, speak your own words, project your own personality, and you will be the performer performing miracles, not a spectator with miracles happening all around you.

Anytime I see a magic catalog, book or magazine of magic, the ads really make me angry. They advertise the tricks and promote them by adding the name of the famous magician who made this trick famous. Then some poor souls go out and buy the trick, then wonder why the "magic" does not



## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

happen for them, too. Once again, it is the performance and not the trick which makes the magic happen.

Too many performers hide behind music when they perform, while they themselves pantomime around the stage. This approach ends up being an excuse for not acting on stage. Remember, you are an actor, a stage performer, above all. How many mime artists or non-speaking magicians have been considered memorable? If Houdini had not spoken during his career, he would not be known today. His whole show was his ability to boast, and he did it well. My friend Burling Hull would tell me that Houdini was a terrible magician. He was unable to do anything with finesse, but his talking kept the audience spellbound.

In order to become a truly great performer, though, you need to perform. Often. That statement may seem obvious, but it needs to be said. Whenever I travel, I meet magicians who have hundreds of magic props but who seldom perform. Most of the time, they say, it is because they won't get paid much.

"Why work if I will only be paid fifty bucks to perform?" they tell me. "It's not worth lugging all my expensive props to do a show if I only get fifty bucks."

"So why did you buy all this equipment in the first place?" I ask.

I tell them that if they don't work, they shouldn't bother buying equipment. If they want to be performers, they should perform. So should you. You should perform all the time, for every occasion, at any price. When you are good enough, you will command better money. If you don't perform, you'll never get good enough.

Can you imagine a rock band not taking a gig because the musicians would have to bring their instruments along? Their instruments cost a lot of money, but the band can't perform without them. Comedians spend time and money on material. If they didn't perform, would they still buy the jokes?

A friend recently told me a story about a clown magician who purchased \$16,000 worth of magic props but didn't know how to use them. My friend actually wanted to know if I would be willing to teach this magician how to perform his

new tricks. This so-called magician has the order reversed. It's not the tricks that count; it's the performance.

However, you must constantly revise that performance. You can't afford to let your act stay the same for very long. I always look to the music industry to find ways to heighten my act, because musicians seem to be on the cutting edge of what's in and what's not. In the 1970s, for example, musicians such as Kiss and David Bowie wore masks and makeup and had elaborate performances. They became someone other than themselves on stage, and their show became a mystery tour through staging and script.

However, in the 1990s, with former Beatle Paul McCartney leading the way, many bands are performing up close to the audience with little staging or lighting, a decidedly more natural approach.

Magicians don't seem to have noticed the change. For a while they did. When Doug Henning took the stage in jeans and a tee shirt, I thought that the tuxedos had become a relic of the past. They were, until recently. Now they seem to be coming back, but there's no good reason for it. No other show business personality would perform in this ancient evening attire. David Letterman wouldn't perform night after night in a formal tuxedo. Magicians, though, praise each other for wearing this tired, formal clothing.

There is a lesson here: Don't spend too much time with other magicians. One of my pet peeves is magicians doing tricks for other magicians. Magicians would seem to be the toughest audience to please. In reality, they are the easiest. They are like members of your own family; they want you to succeed. They will clap and cheer at anything you do. If you want a tough audience, try being an opening act for a rock band. Your audience will often be drunk, stoned, or just off on some other planet. They want the music, not the magic. This is a tough, unforgiving crowd and winning them over is a trick all by itself.

Once you begin to perform, try using a little variety. Not necessarily in the tricks you use, but in the way you present them. Sometimes you can have an audience member assist you with the Linking Rings. Sometimes you will get a better reac-

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tion if you perform the miracle all by yourself. The only way you will learn which way works best, and when, is through trial and error. Try, too, varying the tone in which you present your routine. Try comedy sometimes; try being serious other times. It may not always work. It may not always be good. If you don't try, though, you will never know.

Working with the audience is also an art. You never know if your crowd will be talkative or silent, sad or serious. Whatever they are, try to interact with them, if that is your style. For inspiration on working with an audience, I like watching comedians or talk show hosts. They usually have a strong audience relationship, a bond that allows for a smoother, more entertaining show. Entertaining the audience, of course, is the bottom line, and having the crowd know you as a personality is a wonderful step in this direction.

In fact, the exchange between the performer and one member of the audience often makes for a good show by itself. When it does, other members of the audience will be able to fully relate to that audience member as he or she jokes and talks with the performer. The more the audience enjoys that conversation, the more it will like the performer. Of course, each show will be different, because you never know what the audience will talk about or how it will respond to what you say.

Amateur magicians often wonder why they can do a magic show comfortably for a small group of friends but cannot prevail upon a larger audience. The reason is simple: You feel safe with a small group of friends, but when the audience is all strangers, you don't know how to relate. That problem is common to all performers, not just magicians. The solution is to relate to the audience as though it is a small group of friends, as though you know each audience member personally. Relating to the audience as a gathering of friends will put them at ease—and it will make you more comfortable, too.

Once you are on stage, make sure that your show flows smoothly from one trick to another. Don't try to do everything at once: doing dove tricks, then rabbit tricks, then silks, then ropes, then chains. Fewer tricks done well and in good sequence is always better than many tricks squeezed into a



small amount of time. Also, don't use a trick that is too complicated or cumbersome. You may wind up losing your audience. If that happens, you might as well find another line of work.

Try to pace yourself and your act. If you can have someone videotape your shows, do it. Then study the tapes for flaws as well as the highlights. Work on getting out the bugs. If you don't like the way you performed an illusion, neither will your audience. When you are watching the tape, listen to the crowd response. If they are not clapping, find out why and fix it. In fact, a video recorder is a good investment. Tape every show and review it. Put dates on the tapes and keep those tapes on file.

The venue of your performance also needs close attention. It must be prepared to help you put on your best performance. To make sure that happens, always visit the venue ahead of time to make sure the preparations are what you need. I recently heard a story about a performer hired to perform a straitjacket escape to promote a haunted house show. He arrived on the scene ready to perform, but the owners were nowhere in sight. They finally showed up, but very late. They hadn't prepared the venue for him and left the magician waiting. Then the media began to arrive and were disappointed when the owners weren't there to greet them. Eventually the media left. So did the performer, without ever performing.

Do not, however, depend upon your venue for your lighting, sound system, and backdrops. As soon as you can, buy your own. Although the cost is high, you will give yourself the assurance that your performance will have the effects you want. Working with improper backdrops or lighting can hamper your act considerably. This caution is especially true if you have props that need a special backdrop to make them work. Having your own equipment costs more, but it adds enormously to your ability to project a professional image.

The money will be well spent. Remember, good money will come to those magicians who achieve a good performance. Keep this fact in mind: Your image, your overall show, and your presentation are what you are selling to entertainment buyers and to your audience. According to *Forbes*, in 1993 and 1994, David Copperfield reportedly earned \$55 million.



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You, too, can make money in this business if you treat it as a business.

The first step toward becoming a business is to read all you can about marketing, publicity, promotion, and management so you have a well-rounded understanding of what your business—show business—is all about. No matter how much you know, however, you will need help in selling both your show and your image. Having an agent, even two, is a must. Agents usually work for, or own, an entertainment agency. An agency has a roster of many performers. You may be one of five, ten or even more magicians on its roster.

The agency will run advertising promoting itself as a one-stop entertainment fulfillment shop. The agency will suggest someone on its roster when someone calls looking for a magic act. If you are booked through the agency, it will take 10 to 15% of your fee as its price for getting you the booking. Get on several agency rosters. The more rosters you are on, the better chance you have of being booked.

If you can land yourself a good personal manager, all the better. Even if you can't, there's hope. If you don't have a personal manager, invent one, and give him a different name. Then act as your personal manager under that fictitious name. Why give yourself a different name? Because it's easier for a personal manager to score jobs for you than it is when you are obviously representing yourself.

You, acting under that other name, can more convincingly play up your talents when you talk to prospective entertainment buyers. I know many entertainers who have had imaginary managers for their entire career. After all, most people never meet "The Manager," but they do receive faxes, letters and phone calls from your him or her. (Using another name for yourself as "The Manager" may also get rid of the urge some magicians have to use a stage name. Stage names are a bad idea. They sound fake and you will have trouble cashing checks made out to any name but your own.) The best part of being your own manager is that you never have to actually pay anyone for the job you are doing yourself.

Frankly, though, most performers are better off having someone else do the management and agency work. Once you are doing well, you can afford to hire someone to be your

agent and get you bookings. Do it. Booking yourself and performing are two different jobs, and most magicians cannot do both and do each of them well.

Another part of selling your performance and your image is doing publicity and promotions. If you can't get noticed by the better venues by getting your name in the papers and on television and radio, you can't expect to have quality bookings. Remember, along with the quality bookings come quality paychecks. For publicity purposes, clip and keep everything written about you. Always let the press know where you are performing. No show is too small for the press to attend.

Promoting yourself, however, is not cheap. Promotion kits usually end up costing almost as much as your act itself. Whether it be the photographs or your biography, the package must be prepared professionally. Usually this item will be the first one potential talent buyers will see. Unless it is top-notch, they may never book you. All too often magicians neglect this very important part of their overall show.

Incidentally, the videotapes you make of your performances also are a good promotion and selling tool. If someone wants to see your act, you merely lend them a duplicate tape. Never send your originals. Sometimes the tape won't be returned.

However, all the business organization and knowledge in the world won't make you a successful magician if you don't perfect your art. The measure of a true performer is the performance. Everything else is secondary. I remember some people telling me about a great magic act they saw while on vacation. The magicians in that act made tigers and lions appear and disappear.

"Who were the magicians?" I asked.

"I don't know," was the reply, "but the tiger bit was great."

Become the tiger bit. Become the memorable part of the act. Don't hide behind the staging, the props, and the magic. Go forth and mesmerize your audience. Remember, doing the trick is fine. What counts most, though, is being the performer, being the part of the show that people remember. That is the paramount part of your performance, and it is also the ultimate expression of the magician's art.



# David Copperfield

## The All-Time Greatest Magician

He may be the most important illusionist of his day, an innovator who has helped to redefine the craft. He has taken magic and turned it into an art form, and he had taken that art form and turned it into a stage show, the likes of which have never been seen. Copperfield's magic has become a showroom sellout. The "magic man"—the master showman—has elevated the art and business of illusion to new heights.

*Hollywood Reporter*  
1994

This book would not be complete if I neglected to have David Copperfield within its pages.

David was born on September 16, 1956, in Metuchen, New Jersey. "Right off exit sixteen," he tells people. The only son of Hyman and Rebecca Kotkin, young David Seth Kotkin was performing at the age of ten. His parents, owners of a men's clothing store, were a great built-in audience for the fledgling magician-to-be.

One day he set off to a New York magic shop because he was convinced that with a ventriloquist puppet he would find fame and fortune. While in the shop, he was amazed by the huge array of magic tricks and books. While the proprietor was performing tricks for would-be purchasers, David was completely enthralled. This magic business was much more cool than a talking dummy, he thought to himself. David was



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hooked. He decided he would become the next Houdini, that he was going to be a magician.

David read all he could about magic and magicians. He built or bought every trick he could find. He would go to see any magicians performing anywhere in his area. He became totally absorbed in the world of magic.

David knew that show business was going to be his life. He had thought of becoming a dancer like Gene Kelly or a producer like Walt Disney or Orson Welles. "If I were no longer doing magic today, I would be on the production side of the business," he says. Yet even at his early age of ten, David knew he would become famous at something or another.

At twelve, he was already turning into a professional performer and was charging \$5 for magic performances. At sixteen, David was approached by the New York University Drama Department and asked to teach a course in the art of magic, drama and misdirection.

The young magician originally went by the name Davino, but when he and New York journalist Barry Cunningham met at a magician's convention during David's teenage years, Cunningham suggested that the young magician change his name to David Copperfield. "It just sounded right," he says.

David's interest in various aspects of entertaining intensified during his teenage years, when he would head to Manhattan and slip into theaters during intermission to study the medium.

"I would sneak into shows and hang out with Ben Vereen and watch Bob Fosse's work," Copperfield says. "A lot of what I do comes from my love for theater."

When David was actually old enough to attend college himself, his education only lasted a few weeks. In fact, he only tried college to make his parents happy. He wanted to move on to magic performing full-time.

Adding the magical name "Copperfield," David set off for the footlights. He landed a role in the Chicago production of "The Magic Man," a show in which David not only performed magic, but also sang, danced and acted. He loved the big stage. He was all of eighteen years of age.

It was the theatrics of "The Magic Man" that instilled in

## David Copperfield

him the new way to perform, not rigidly and formally, as was custom. Instead, he made each trick a small show on its own merit. Between each illusion, David shared his personality. In these interludes he would come out of his magician's character and talk with his audience.

"I learned that what people wanted was someone natural, more relaxed, so I put that forth on stage and things really started to take off."

From this time on, David embarked on a quest to be the world's greatest magician. Although many have tried to be the best, such as Doug Henning or Mark Wilson, only Copperfield has made it to that highest of peaks.

A television producer named Joe Cates heard about David and his performance in "The Magic Man" and sold him in a show to ABC for promoting their upcoming season. This special, "The Magic of ABC, starring David Copperfield," was a turning point, and the exposure David received was just the vehicle he needed to launch his career.

His shows began to incorporate rock music into their themes. And today, whether it is Phil Collins or Peter Gabriel, rock still is an integral part of David's show.

His next big break was the deal he fashioned with CBS, which called for David Copperfield to have his own television special. Now he was going to perform magic in the way he wanted magic to be seen. Since this first show on CBS, David has gone on to do another fifteen specials for the network.

David Copperfield is moving onto new terrain. His 1994 television special for CBS was a retrospective of his first fifteen television specials and appearances.

Little did he know when he started out that by age 37 he would be commanding much respect from the entertainment business and earning a whopping \$55 million in 1993-1994 (according to *Forbes Magazine*). Needless to say, no other magic performer has ever earned so much money in a single year. In reality, he sees his competition for entertainment dollars as people the likes of Madonna, Janet Jackson, or Phil Collins. Harry Houdini never earned one tenth as much in his entire career.

For more than a decade, he has toured for at least 48 weeks

## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

each year, often performing twice in one day. Copperfield's invasion of Europe in the fall of 1994 consisted of stops to sold-out theaters in Paris, London, Milan, Vienna, Zurich and other major cities. In the previous year was a record-breaking, two-month, 115-performance tour of Germany that grossed a reported \$35 million. But the grueling schedule seems to energize Copperfield. He's a perfectionist by his own account and is always trying to adapt to what his audience wants. "I am never satisfied and am always working and reworking what I do," he says. "It has been a continuous process."

Behind the scenes, David has quite a management company. Although he has no agent, his management company is far better than any agent could ever be.

City-to-city transportation is magically undertaken with the help of three luxury buses and three 48-foot tractor trailers. David's name and pictures stand more than nine feet high on each of the long trailers and no one can miss his troupe as it travels along the highways.

The success has not gone to David's head. Sure, he travels first class, uses limousines, private jets, and so on, but he also does autograph sessions after nearly every show. Audience members can receive an autograph and often take personal photos with David.

He seems to always have time to talk to a young fan on his way to his car after a night of performing. He continues to perform up to five hundred shows per year and logs thousands of miles along the way. He earns millions of dollars for his work and has very little time for any type of life outside of his career. Very few stars of his caliber, if any, will go through this much work to please their audience.

"David is the world's master illusionist, an unbelievable showman," says CBS President of Entertainment Peter Tortorici. "He's charismatic and imaginative beyond belief, and he has an incredible rapport with his audience."

The most amazing part of the show is his showmanship. While in Orlando, Florida, during his 1994 tour, his finale was to make it "snow" inside the theater. The story that David told while performing this illusion captivated the audience. I would personally like to see him materialize beach sand in



## David Copperfield

New York during a January show. On the other hand, who wants to walk out of the theater covered with sand?

David creates sensations by doing the unusual with a wide variety of magic. He made the Statue of Liberty vanish on national television. The Statue of Liberty is by far one of the most celebrated illusions David Copperfield has performed. As seen by millions on television and by the live audience who was present, the Statue was clearly seen illuminated against the night sky, both by spotlights shining on it and a ring of lights at its base. The audience members sat on a stage facing a curtain. The curtain was then closed. When it was reopened, the Statue was gone, while the spotlights were still blazing and the ring of lights was still lit. Above, a helicopter hovered, but no Statue was in sight. Moments later the curtain was again closed. This time, when it reopened, the Statue has returned.

He now regularly incorporates in his show his "Flying" illusion. In this piece, David floats up off the stage and flies all around. He even flies with a young lady in his arms, who then plays the Lois Lane to his Superman. The crowd loves it. To me, flying is like making the Statue of Liberty vanish at the end of each show.

I grew up watching Peter Pan, and I was amazed to see not only Peter Pan fly, but Wendy and the others, too. I tried to think good thoughts and jumped off my bed, but I never could fly. David Copperfield is still young enough to fly like Peter Pan.

David has persevered. He says the secret of his success is "to consider nothing impossible, then start treating possibilities as probabilities."

Recently, at the end of a two-show night, with a limo waiting and a jet standing by to take him to New York, David was zooming out of Orlando and off to a few days of rest and relaxation. He stopped to sign the autographs of a few young fans. Then he stepped into the car and off into the night. In those few moments, David Copperfield showed all that he is now just as he has always been: just the boy next door, even though we know him as the all-time greatest magician. He is the amazing David Copperfield.



## Copperfield's Museum: The Preservation of the History of Magic

Watching David Copperfield give a tour of his private magic museum is a lot like seeing a kid get loose in a candy store—a candy store he owns.

Only Copperfield isn't a kid, and this is far from the first time he has conducted a tour of the extraordinary collection. Still, as he glides from one display to the next, flips through the pages of a manuscript penned by Harry Houdini and then sets into motion his collection of 19th-century animatronic devices, you can't help but get caught up in his enthusiasm. Like so many things Copperfield does, he does it with a passion and an interest that's infectious. This private treasure chest, tucked away in two hidden rooms in a section of a Nevada warehouse, is filled with some of the most important pieces of magic's heritage.

*Hollywood Reporter*  
1994

David Copperfield has a secret passion: preserving the history of the art of magic for present and future generations by providing a safe permanent home for antiquarian props, books, and other historical matter related to conjuring and the allied arts. His vast collection is housed at a secret location in Nevada.

It all started a few years ago when David purchased at auction the Mulholland Library of Conjuring and the Allied Arts, for the price of \$2.2 million. Boasting some 80,000 pieces, including 15,000 magic books (some of which date to the 16th century) the collection includes the exceedingly rare first

## David Copperfield

magic book ever published in the New World, Houdini memorabilia and other priceless items.

Why did David acquire the collection? "Here was the most important testament in existence to the incredibly rich legacy of the art of magic, the art to which I have devoted my life," said Copperfield. "I wanted to be sure this priceless library was not split up."

Shortly thereafter, David's collection expanded with the acquisition of individual pieces and other entire collections. It is now known as the International Museum and Library of the Conjuring Arts.

David's goal was to build a monument to the history of magic as a performing art, an ongoing museum that would survive us all. Magic is considered as perhaps the oldest and possibly the most universal of all the performing arts, and the International Museum and Library of the Conjuring Arts is today the world's foremost repository of historical documentation and artifacts on magic, illusion, and the allied arts.

The Museum recently acquired the Cole Collection, the largest of its kind in the United Kingdom. This vast acquisition totals 5000 cubic feet of magic-related documents and artifacts and was formerly in storage at Sotheby's in London. The Museum will also house the Dr. Robert J. Albo Collection, possibly the most important private collection of antiquarian magical props and apparatus ever assembled. Recent acquisitions also include the Jaw Marshall poster collection and the Dante/Thurston collection. The new acquisitions require an expansion of the present museum premises and architects are presently working on plans.

Among the great historical pieces in the museum are Houdini's Metamorphosis trunk (the ancestor of one of the most popular of contemporary illusions); Houdini's vanishing and appearing lamps (still in working order); Okito's Floating Ball (which at the time fooled even magicians); the Channing Pollock props (the dove-producing Ed Sullivan act that inspired a thousand other nightclub acts); the Houdini-Kellar letters (a fascinating three-year exchange of barbs, ideas and opinions by two legendary performers); the turban owned by Alexander "The Man Who Knows" (indeed, the turban sug-

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gests exactly how Alexander "knew"); Cardini's tuxedo, monocle, and personal manipulative props; the Chung Ling Soo rifle (possibly the weapon which ended Soo's life and career on stage when his famous bullet-catching feat ended in death); Dante's Spirit Cabinet (the precursor of the live midnight spook show illusions that frightened thrill seekers in the 40s and 50s); Maskelyne's Decapitated Princess Chair; and Orson Welles' Buzzsaw Illusion (designed for Rita Hayworth, and performed with Marlene Dietrich).

The library portion of the collection contains works in over 20 languages, ranging from the sixteenth century to contemporary artifacts: materials of Heller, Bosco, LeRoy, Goldin, Cazaneuve, Vanek, Dobler, Okito, Blitz, Dante, Herrmann, Chung Ling Soo, Thurston, Blackstone and thousands of other artists.

It also contains tens of thousands of graphic images, prints, posters, playbills and photographs chronicling the wonder workers of yesteryear, from the most modest of street performers to the most bombastic stage illusionists. Countless holograph letters, manuscripts and scrapbooks of leading magicians throughout the years are also included.

Hundreds of Houdini items (a gift to the original Mulholland Collection from Harry Houdini himself), including the original Edison cylinders of the only known recordings of Houdini's voice, are contained there.

Among the treasures of the Museum are incredible automata built by Robert Houdin, the father of modern magic, from whom Houdini took his name.

In the display cases of the Museum can be seen Professor Hoffmann's props for the cups and balls, the actual coins Wyman the Wizard caused to pass through President Abraham Lincoln's hands and Houdini's instructions to himself on performing the Metamorphosis illusion.

The walls of the Museum are lined with extraordinarily well-preserved stone lithographs of magicians advertising their incredible feats. Often these posters depict the actual prop standing only a few feet away on the Museum floor.

Some of the important early publishing works housed in the Museum include:



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- The first edition of Scott's *The Discoveries of Witchcraft*, 1584, the first important work in the English language to discuss conjuror's methods (written at the time to save conjurors from being burned at the stake for witchcraft)
- *Hocus Pocus Jr.*
- Dean's *Whole Art of Legerdemain, or Hocus Pocus in Perfection*, 1st ed., 1722
- Professor Hoffmann's own annotated copies of *Modern Magic*, *More Magic* and *Later Magic*, which revolutionized magic at the end of the nineteenth century.

The preservation of these priceless items is one of the Museum's primary missions. Thousands of documents, posters, and books have been rescued from decay as part of the Museum's ongoing conservation and restoration program.

"Every contemporary magician stands on the shoulders of giants," says Copperfield, "and the Museum is eloquent proof of the rich mosaic of contributions by men and women throughout the ages to this most compelling of all the art forms."

The International Museum and Library of the Conjuring Arts is a private collection made available to scholars interested in the history of conjuring upon written application to the Archivist.

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## More Facts and Notes About David Copperfield

More than any other magician that preceded him, David Copperfield understands his craft. "Before there can be wonders," says Copperfield, "there must be wonder. In my show, I try to transport people on a journey of the imagination, much in the same way as a great film director does." But in the magic of David Copperfield, the wonder is real. The miracles are happening live before real witnesses.



## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

David Copperfield has rewritten the book on magic. He has brought magic to heights of artistry and imagination undreamed of by wizards or audiences past. The illusions are both spectacular mysteries and entertaining theater. He blends mystery and romance into sensual illusions that dazzle the mind and move the heart. But the real magic is the man: David Copperfield has changed our view of what magic is and can be for all time.

- In 1982 he vanished an airplane surrounded by a ring of astonished spectators.
- The next year he made the Statue of Liberty disappear before stunned New Yorkers and a home audience of millions.
- His eighth annual offering brought him to China. The awe-inspiring 2800-mile-long landmark was the scene of David's history-making illusion, and as thousands looked on, David successfully walked through the Great Wall of China.
- In 1987 he became the first person to escape from Alcatraz.
- He made a seventy-ton Orient Express train car vanish in midair above a circle of astounded spectators.
- For all the grandeur of his super illusions, David is also a master at close-up magic, and every live show and television special has featured mind boggling, intimate wonders. For his fifteenth special, David tore up and restored the famous Honus Wagner baseball card, the ultimate sports collectible worth \$500,000.00, before its nervous owner, hockey superstar Wayne Gretzky.
- David Copperfield owns The International Museum and Library of the Conjuring Arts, the world's largest repository of antiquarian books, magic, illusions, and other ephemeral matter on magic and the allied arts.
- The average time it takes David Copperfield to create a new illusion, from conception to performance, is two and a half years. Some illusions, such as Flying, took over seven years to develop.

## David Copperfield

- 1994 marked David Copperfield's 16th annual television special on CBS—more than any other single entertainer in history.
- David Copperfield tours with a company of 35 people, plus local stagehands and security, ranging from a minimum of an additional 30 people up to 100 in foreign countries.
- David Copperfield has performed seven times for U.S. Presidents.
- David's fan club, known as David Copperfield International, is run by David's Dad! The club publishes a quarterly newsletter, "Backstage With David".

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## The Secrets of David Copperfield's Project Magic

"Project Magic is a program that uses magic as a form of therapy for people with disabilities where magicians, therapists, and doctors teach magic to patients to help them regain their dexterity and coordination by learning sleight of hand. In addition, this magic builds the patient's self esteem by providing a skill that even an able-bodied person doesn't have.

Magic is taught to improve a person's memory, planning, sequencing, color recognition, mathematics and movement, as well as enhancing communication skills.

Project Magic is currently being utilized in 1000 hospitals in 30 countries around the world. For the first time, the general public can share in the secrets of this program. Enjoy."

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## The Impossible Knot

The magician holds a length of rope with one end in each hand. He invites the spectator to do the same with another

## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

piece of rope. Stating that it would be impossible to tie a knot in a rope without letting go of at least one end, the wizard proceeds to drape the rope over his arm, forming a series of simple loops and twists. This is done slowly, without letting go of the ends, so the spectator can copy every move the magician makes with his rope. Still holding both ends, the magician shakes the rope from his arm—a knot appears, magically, in the center. No knot is formed in the spectator's rope, even though he is sure he has copied the magician's every move.

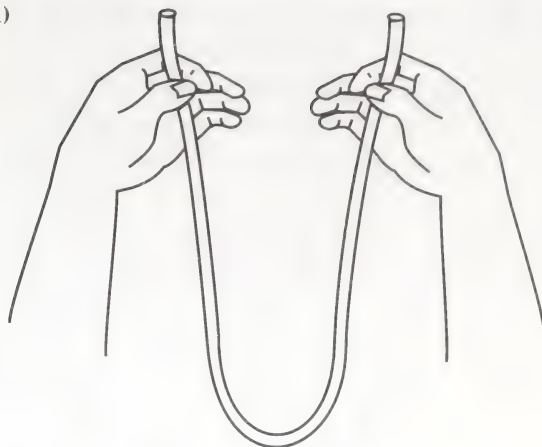
David Copperfield says: "Tricks of the 'Do As I Do' type are always effective, and this is one of the best. With a little practice and one simple, secret move, you can baffle your audience time after time."

◆ **THE SECRET:** You need two ropes, each about four feet in length, one for yourself, the other for a spectator.

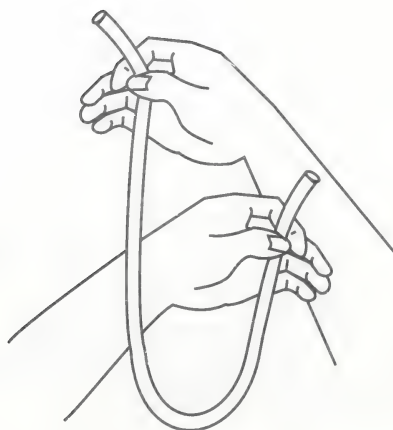
1. Hold your rope near the ends between the thumb and index finger of each hand, with the rope hanging down as shown.
2. Bring your right hand inward (towards you) and drape the rope over your left wrist as shown.
3. Draw the right end of the rope downward and beneath the hanging loop. This divides the hanging loop into two sections, left and right.
4. Insert your right hand (still holding the right end) through the left section of the loop and, in the same continuous action (without letting go), bring your hand back through the right section of the loop, nipping the rope at Point A as shown. Another way to describe Step 4 is that your right hand, still holding its end, goes into the loop and picks up Point A on the back of your right wrist. Point A is then pulled out through the loop to form the set-up shown in Step 5.
5. Without releasing either hand, move your right hand back to the right, bringing the nipped rope with it. Point A is now resting on the back of your right wrist. (*Note:* This is the only part of this excellent magical puzzle that

# David Copperfield

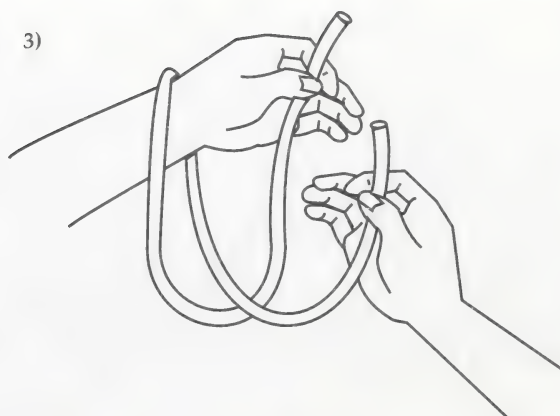
1)



2)



3)





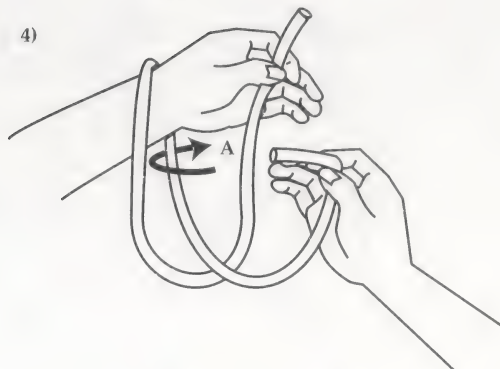
## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

- is difficult to illustrate. Try it with the rope in your hands until you hold the rope as shown in Step 5.
6. Move your right hand level with your left, and pull the rope taut so it forms the criss-cross pattern between your wrists as shown. Note that in the illustration a new spot is indicated on the rope, Point B. Point B is just below the end held by the right hand. Now, relax the tension on the rope and tilt both hands forward and downward, so the outside loops, which are pressed against your wrist, begin to slide over the ends of your hands.
  7. You are now ready for the secret move. As the rope begins to fall off your wrists, your right hand prepares to secretly release its end and grasp the rope at Point B as described in Step 8.
  8. As the loops slide completely over and off your hands, draw your hands apart. At the same time, release the right end of the rope with your thumb and index finger, and secretly grasp Point B with your other three fingers. Because of the tossing movement of the loops as they fall off your wrists, the audience is completely unaware of this small move, which is the whole secret of the trick.
  9. As you draw your hands apart, the right end of the rope will automatically pull through the little loop, forming a knot in the center of the rope.
  10. Your right thumb and index finger immediately regain their original grip on the end of the rope, so all looks the same as the knot is formed.

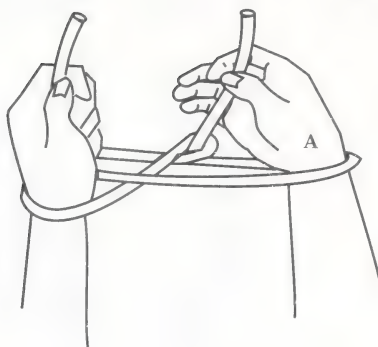
**ADDITIONAL ADVICE:** All through the routine, you should emphasize that you never release the ends of the rope. Yet a knot still appears in the rope. That makes this an *Impossible Knot*. Practice the moves until they become smooth and natural. When you present the effect, do each move very slowly, step by step, so the spectators can follow them easily. Your purpose is to show the audience exactly how to do it—except for the final toss, where you secretly release the right end of the rope, enabling you to produce a knot where everyone else fails. Although they copy your moves with ropes of their own,

# David Copperfield

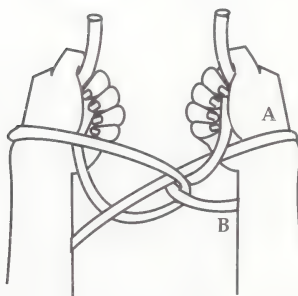
4)



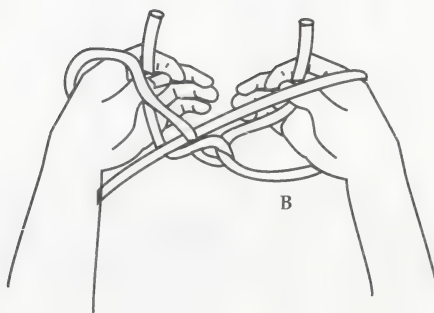
5)



6)

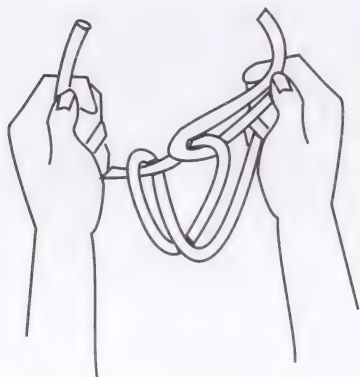


7)

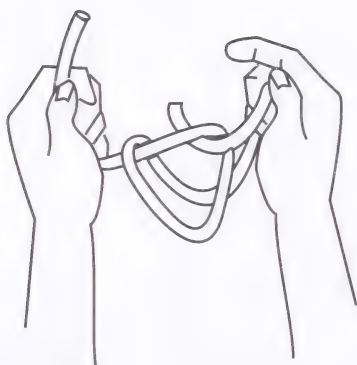


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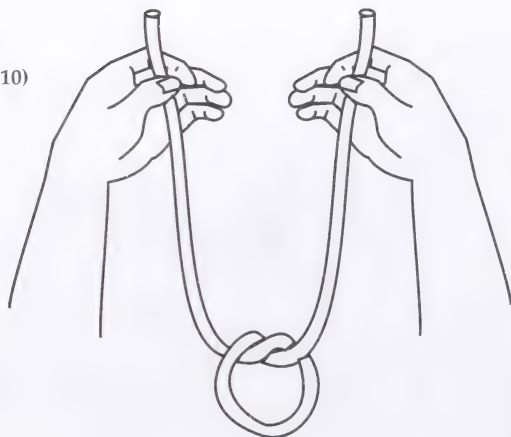
8)



9)



10)



they will always miss the vital point, making the trick more baffling each time it is repeated.

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## The Jumping Rubber Band

The magician places a rubber band around his index and middle fingers. He closes his hand into a fist. When he opens his hand, the band magically jumps to his ring and little fingers.

David Copperfield says: "Magic does not always require elaborate equipment or expert sleight of hand. Here is a very simple effect that will amaze any audience."

This illusion is excellent to use as an introduction to magic. It requires only a simple level of cognitive skill—performance of a three-step sequential task. The trick, with practice, can be performed one-handed. A moderate to high level of dexterity is necessary to manipulate the rubber band with one hand. Less dexterity is necessary if two hands are used.

**ADAPTATIONS:** For a one-handed set-up and performance of this effect, begin by placing the band around the ring and little fingers. Insert the thumb into the band and pull it out from the fingers. Close the hand into a fist, letting the tips of the fingers go inside the band. Remove the thumb and open the hand to cause the rubber band to jump.

If full finger extension is not possible, the trick can still be accomplished when initiated with the rubber band around the index and middle fingers. After inserting all fingertips, flick or press against the band with the thumb. This will sufficiently stretch the rubber band and cause it to jump to the other fingers.

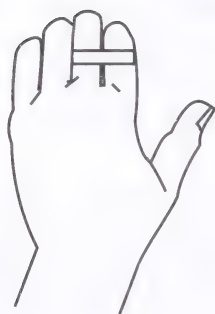
### ◆ THE SECRET:

1. Place the rubber band around the base of your index and middle fingers on your left hand. If the band is too loose, you may put it around twice. Experiment with the rub-



# All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

## Audience View

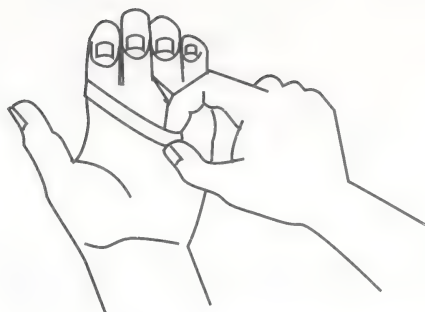


# David Copperfield

## Performer's View



1)



2)



3)



4)

## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

ber band you will be using, so that you get the proper tension on the band. The back of your hand is toward the audience and your palm faces you.

2. Close your left hand into a fist by bending your fingers into your palm. At the same time, secretly use the index finger of your right hand to stretch the rubber band down so that the tips of all four left fingers can be inserted into the rubber band.
3. Your hand now looks to you as shown in the accompanying illustration.
4. Now straighten out your fingers and the band will automatically jump to a new position around your left ring and little finger.

---

## The Challenge Jumping Rubber Band

The magician explains that to make it impossible for the band to jump (as it did in the Jumping Rubber Band which he has just finished performing), he will encircle the tips of all of the fingers of his left hand individually with another rubber band, locking on the first rubber band, which is around the index and middle fingers. Although it now appears impossible for the band to jump, he makes a fist, opens the hand, and the "locked-in" rubberband now appears on the ring and little fingers of the left hand. The use of two hands is necessary to perform this trick. One hand is needed to place the twisted challenge rubber band onto the other hand.

David Copperfield says: "This can be used as a follow-up for the Jumping Rubber Band. The adding of the extra band to "lock-in" the jumper is a clever touch that makes a simple trick into a very strong effect."

### ◆ THE SECRET:

1. Place an additional rubber band around the tips of the fingers of your left hand, as shown in the illustration.

# David Copperfield





## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

(The first band has already been placed on the index and middle fingers. See Jumping Rubber Band for detailed explanation.)

2. Then proceed in exactly the same way as you did before: fold your hand into a fist, inserting the tips of the fingers into the band which is to jump. Straighten out your fingers, and the band will jump just as before.

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## Linking Paper Clips

Two paper clips are clipped on a folded dollar bill. The ends of the bill are pulled and the paper clips jump from the bill. After close inspection of the paper clips, they are found to be linked.

### ◆ THE SECRET:

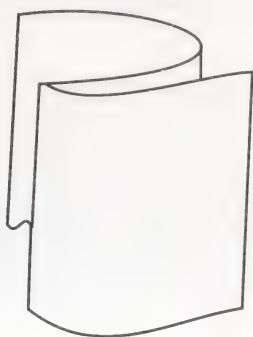
1. Fold a dollar bill in thirds as in the illustration.
2. Take a few paper clips from your pocket and place one around the first and second folds. Place the other clips around the second and third folds.
3. If you pull the upper corners away from you in a quick motion, the paper clips will link and drop to the table.

Additional steps may be added to this trick:

4. As you are folding the bill, place a rubber band around the dollar and position it within one of the folds. Then place the clips on the dollar as previously described.
5. This time, when you pull the ends of the bill, not only will the paper clips become linked, but also they will end up attached to the rubber band.

# David Copperfield

1)



2)



3)



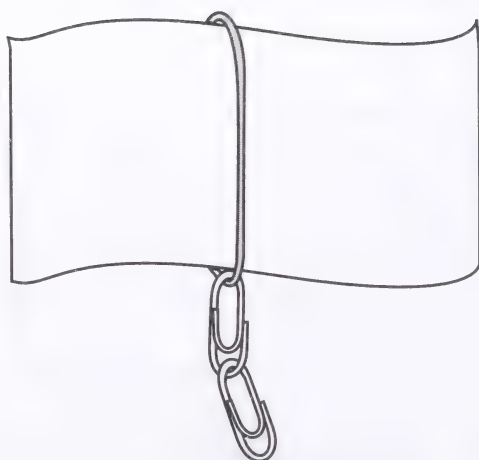
# All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

## Variation

1)



2)



# Robert Houdin

## Father of Modern Magic

Born Jean Eugene Robert in 1805, he began as a watchmaker's apprentice. On a visit to a bookstore for a book on watch repair, he mistakenly took a book on magic. All night, by candlelight, the young man read, practiced and experimented with the strange yet scientific feats of magic.

When he was not at the watchmaker's shop, he would practice his sleight of hand, his juggling, his card manipulations. What he really craved was the chance to demonstrate his skill in front of an audience. He could create the trick, but he did not know how to present it.

Robert eventually married a young girl named Houdin. The custom of the day led Jean to change his name to Jean-Eugene Robert-Houdin. He continued with his magic and began to perform in his home of France.

His stage settings were simple, unlike most magicians of the time, but he also used elegant furniture and table settings. He dressed in a tuxedo, which was the way men in the audience would dress in those days when they attended such a theatrical production. He created a stage setting which concentrated on the performer and not the illusions. Magicians of the time had elaborate settings, many with Chinese or other oriental decor, along with elaborate costumes and numerous people in the act.

Taking advantage of his watchmaker background, young Jean-Eugene began to build and invent many mechanically operated tricks and illusions. One such illusion was performed with his young son. His son would stand on a small stool. Houdin would pretend to hypnotize the boy, then place a stick



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extending to the floor under each armpit. At the appropriate moment Houdin would kick the stool away and then remove one of the sticks. To make sure this illusion was an even greater effect, he would then take hold of his son's feet and raise his body at a ninety-degree angle to the remaining stick. His son was now parallel to the floor and seemed to be floating horizontally. Houdin would then pass a solid hoop over his son and down to the floor around the remaining stick. Today, many magicians use this trick, but instead of sticks, they use brooms (see the broomstick illusion in this book).

Although Houdin invented hundreds of illusions, one of his most famous was that of a figure dressed in the Louis XV style, seated at a small writing desk. The mechanical figure was able to draw many complicated animals as well as write its name and the date with the time of day. The face of the mechanism was molded to resemble Houdin. This particular illusion actually operated with the workings of a watch-like mechanism. Houdin sold this illusion to the Barnum and Bailey Circus. Sadly, however, it was eventually destroyed in a fire.

In 1844, although his automation and illusions were famous worldwide, Houdin found that people were not very impressed with the simple things his automation could do. So he created a new automation called the "Pastry Cook." This one was more the size of a child. Along with it was a small "house," which was the cook's bakery. Members of the audience would call out different types of pastry. Then the cook would enter the house and return with the chosen dessert. This would go on and on. Audience members could even give the cook money for a dessert and he would bring back the correct change.

This effect too, was just part of the act. Houdin would make someone's ring vanish. Then the cook would enter the house and return with a cake. Inside the cake would be the ring. Although Houdin had created many self-working automations, this one was controlled by a small boy, who was hidden inside the mechanism. The lad would "run" the cook and perform the "magic."

His most remembered magic trick was the "Bullet Catch." In this illusion, a member of the audience would put his or

## Robert Houdin

her initials on a bullet, load it into a rifle and fire it across the stage at Houdin. Houdin would catch the bullet between his teeth. The initials were intact, and so was Houdin.

Houdin was the most successful magician of all time when he finally retired. He spent his retirement reading, writing books, inventing and working with the theater he founded. He had electric clocks operating all over his estate. This fact in itself is astounding, when considering that these mechanisms are over one hundred and fifty years old. Houdin died of natural causes in 1871. He was sixty six years old.

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## Tip Over Trunk

This effect is a multipurpose illusion for making things, or people, or animals either appear, disappear or change places. The angles for this illusion make it a deep-stage illusion only. A deep stage is a setting which extends at least twenty feet from the audience, unless special staging is used to camouflage the secret.

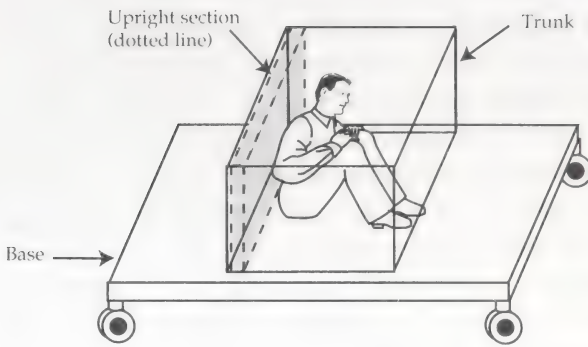
A large trunk or packing box is wheeled to the front of the stage. The box is at least three feet high, four feet wide and two feet deep and has casters on the bottom for freedom of movement. The base with wheels is connected to the box with a strip hinge. This construction allows the performer to tip the box over on its side, lift the lid and show that the box is empty. Once the box is tipped on its side, the audience can clearly see the inside, right down to the bottom.

Then the box is tipped back onto its base. Instantly the lid is opened and out steps an assistant. The box is tipped forward again and shown empty. This time, when the box is tipped back, the lid is opened and out steps another assistant, or whatever the performer wishes. The box can also be made to vanish people, tigers or whatever.

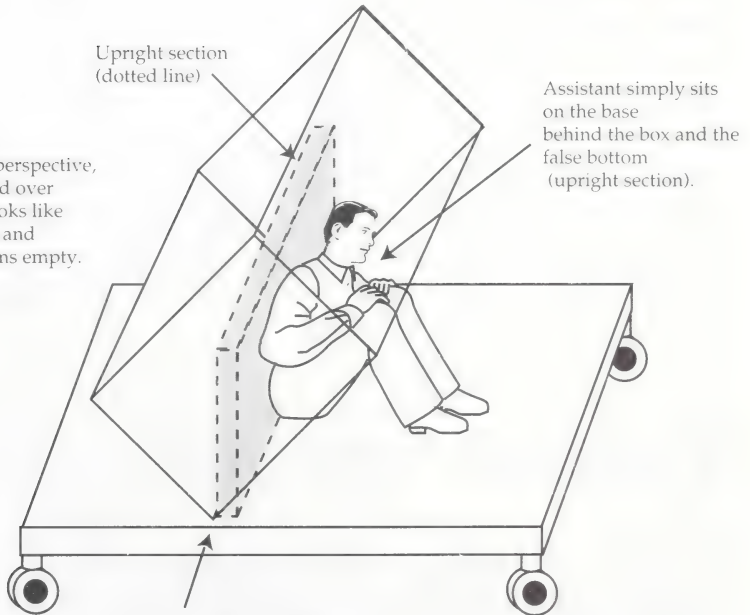
◆ **THE SECRET:** The box is made without a bottom. The base on which it is hinged has a section which is anchored in an upright position, parallel to the sides of the box. When the box is tipped over and the lid is opened, the audience sees this upright section and thinks it is the bottom of the box. In reality the person or people hiding on the base, behind the box (and false bottom) simply sits on the wheeled base. From the front, the assistant cannot be seen by the audience. From the extreme sides, however, they would be seen. That is why the angles of this illusion must be carefully planned.

Sometimes other props or staging are placed on either side of the illusion, thereby blocking the audience from seeing anything behind the box once it is tipped. The tipped position is the only time when angles matter. Once the box is tipped back on the platform, the assistant or object is inside the box and

# Robert Houdin



→  
From the audience's perspective,  
when the box is tipped over  
the upright section looks like  
the bottom of the box and  
therefore the box seems empty.



Box has no bottom and is hinged  
to the base right at the upright section.



completely hidden. For this reason, you can spin the box all around when it is in the upright position.

The box can be a trunk or packing crate as long as it does not have a bottom. The platform is usually plywood with caster wheels attached to it. In place of the bottom of the box is the upright section (see illustration) which is connected to the platform. The trunk or box is hinged to the platform at the upright section. When tipped, the lid is opened up and the audience can clearly see into the box. When the person is produced from the box, he or she will step on the lip of the box as they step out. In some cases a small door is cut in one side of the trunk allowing the person being produced to step through this box rather than stepping up on the lip.

When performing this trick, don't make the trunk or box look too nice or shiny. Instead, make it look like an old used trunk or box. Use destination stickers from foreign countries, old postcards, messy sprays of paint or anything to make it look like the crate or trunk it is supposed to be. These decorations will add to the illusion. When something is too shiny and new, it makes the audience think that it is rigged in some manner. You must give the illusion that you can perform miracles on even the plainest of items. In this case, it's an old trunk.

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## Broomstick Suspension

Similar to the original Robert Houdin version of the stick suspension, the broomstick suspension is the modernized way of presenting the illusion. Two regular broomsticks are brought to the stage and placed with the handles down, bristles up, in a platform. Between the two broomsticks the magician places a small stool. The broomsticks are about two feet apart. A young person is asked to stand on the stool and let his or her arms hang over the broomstick bristles.

Upon command, the youngster is seemingly hypnotized. The stool is removed, then one of the brooms is removed, and

the youngster remains in suspension. Then the performer takes hold of the youngster's feet and begins to arc them so that they are at a 90-degree angle to the remaining broom. A hoop is passed over the youngster and remaining broom. The youngster is then lowered back to the original position, as is the second broom. Then the stool is replaced. The young assistant is then released from his or her hypnotic state and steps down from the stool. Everything used in the illusion is then taken down and brought off stage, so the performer may then move on to the next miracle.

The trick is a nice illusion, but it needs a good deal of showmanship to make it really good. Because this trick has been done so often, by so many performers, it has become boring. Seldom does the modern audience believe that the assistant is hypnotized, and most people in the audience will be aware that the broom is rigged. Copperfield-style showmanship would enhance the trick.

◆ **THE SECRET:** The assistant is wearing flowing clothes. Underneath the loose outfit is a body harness with a joining point under the armpit. This joint hooks into a coupling which is hidden in the broom bristles. The broom is specially manufactured and is actually made of metal, but painted to resemble wood. A ratchet at the point of connection allows the assistant to assume the suspended position by letting his or her feet be moved upwards while still holding the assistant's torso firmly in place at the armpit.

A platform with holes drilled for the two brooms is needed. When the assistant is getting his or her arms over the broom bristles, the assistant will engage the joining points into the ratchet. All the paraphernalia is hidden during the positioning of the assistant onto the brooms by the flowing clothes worn by the assistant. Once the elements are in place, neither the stool nor the second broom are needed, but the audience does not know this. When the stool is taken away, the assistant is in the air, maintained by the joining point. Then the second broom is moved away.

Because the joining point is a ratchet, the performer merely has to bring the assistant up to the desired angle, and the

ratchet will lock into place. Then the hoop is passed over the assistant without any sort of magical assistance. Once the trick is complete, the performer lowers the assistant back to the original position by having the ratchet released. The illusion is then complete.

Points to remember: The secret is the ratchet-type mechanism, which is available from most equipment suppliers. It must be a silent one however, or the audience will hear it clicking into and out of position.

The fake broom will be very heavy because it is made of metal. Remember not to let the extra weight show in the way the broom is carried or handled on the stage.

The body harness must be made to fit into the broom mechanism very easily. The harness is worn by the assistant under his or her clothing. It is this harness which holds the pin, which engages the broomstick, under the assistant's armpit.

This illusion was a mainstay of the modern performer until the early nineteen twenties. It may still be seen in some traveling sideshows.

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## Indian Rope Trick

Immensely popular at the turn of the century, this is a trick I consider a forgotten gem of magic performance because it is not performed by any modern illusionists. Since the audience is not impressed—they simply don't accept it—magicians have stayed away from it.

This illusion can be performed both outside, in an open area, and inside, on the stage.

The performer brings a small wicker basket to the center of the performing area. From within the basket a rope is withdrawn. The performer throws the rope into the air. Then the rope is thrown a second time. On the third try, the rope not only remains in the air but continues to move up and out of the basket, going ever higher and higher into the air.

At some point, the rope is so high the audience can no



longer see the end or top of the rope. Then a young assistant climbs up the rope and continues to climb until the assistant, too, is out of sight. At this moment, the performer fires a pistol. The rope falls back to the stage, and the assistant is gone.

◆ **THE SECRET:** As you have seen with other illusions in this book, this trick has several solutions. And this particular trick is filled with controversy, too.

It seems that no one ever really saw the original version of this trick. In the original version, fake holy men (actually magicians) claimed the event worked just as indicated, with no trickery. Whether this assertion is true or not, I am not saying. But I can say with certainty that in all my research, I have not found a single authentic viewing of this spectacle.

The illusion is based on a rope that has a hook on one end. The hook is like that found on a hitch. Across the top of the stage a thin strand of metal wire is strung. The wire must be strong enough to support both the rope and the assistant. In this version, the rope is hooked to the metal strand during one of the throws. This accomplishment is easier than it sounds.

In another more modern version, the end of the rope is connected to a metal wire from the beginning. It is given enough slack so that it does not stifle the movement of the basket at the beginning of the illusion. As a result, the throwing of the rope is not really needed, but it does misdirect the audience.

Here's how it works: The wire is attached to a pulley system or winch. At the right moment, the backstage assistant will turn on the pulley and lift the rope up into the air. The disappearing assistant merely climbs the straightened rope and then climbs into the rafter area above the curtain lines. The act often is accompanied with smoke filling the air above the rope. That way, the assistant appears to have vanished into a cloud of smoke.

Sometimes, for heightened effect, the performer will "snake-charm" the rope out of the basket instead of lifting it out or throwing it up. Or the assistant could climb aboard the rope when it is only a couple of feet out of the basket. The rope then continues to climb with the assistant aboard. This tech-



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nique is easier than finding someone strong enough to actually climb the rope.

The assistant does not need to vanish at the top of the rope, especially if there's nowhere for the assistant to climb. In this case the assistant can just climb back down. The rising rope is the trick, after all.

This trick is one of those illusions that many have heard about but few have seen. It is often shown in movies such as "Aladdin" or "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves."

Although equipment such as pulleys and winches are needed to pull this one off, it is a simple trick with a good visual effect—if nobody spots the trick.

# Howard Thurston

## Magic Reborn

Howard Thurston lived from 1869–1936. Although he began his career as a petty thief, he became one of the most admired performers of modern time. It was Thurston who bought the Kellar show (see Kellar biography on page 45) and continued to build on the greatness started by Kellar.

It seems that Thurston was on a train bound for some university when a poster advertising the magician Hermann caught his eye. He was immediately intrigued. Perhaps due to Thurston's early days as a thief, he became an expert in coin and card manipulation. His hands were very dextrous and could palm any size coin.

Once he purchased the Kellar show in 1908, Thurston added many more wonders. He was the first to make automobiles, with a full complement of occupants, vanish. He would make a piano float while it was being played. His show was truly a wonder.

But as Thurston was reaching his height, vaudeville was beginning to lose ground to the new motion picture industry. Even though Thurston continued to pull in record crowds everywhere he performed all across the world, he saw the writing on the wall, and what he saw came to pass. Very soon, magic was beginning to become a phenomenon of the past, along with vaudeville. Thurston persevered and continued to tour the show, but to much reduced audiences.

One of Thurston's greatest illusions was his Floating Ball Effect (see Floating Ball on page 108). In this grand-stage illusion, he made a small metal ball magically appear.

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Then the rest of the show, up to twenty minutes, was spent watching this wondrous ball float, dance, sway and swing to a variety of music. In the end, the ball would simply vanish, right before the eyes of the approving crowd.

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# Levitation

One of the most startling effects in magic has always been the Asrah Floating Lady illusion. Whether you levitate an assistant, a horse or a car, getting something to float has always pleased the crowd. I will explain the illusion in terms of floating a woman, but the principle will work with any person or object, big or small.

The assistant is brought up to center stage. She is placed in a reclining position on a couch and then covered with a large cloth. She is commanded to rise. Once she has risen to a height of one foot above the couch, the couch is taken away and the performer walks all around the floating woman.

She continues to rise until she is well over the head of the performer. Then she slowly descends until she is level with the performer's head. Again she begins to rise. This time, the performer takes hold of the cloth and while she is rising, the cloth is whisked away. The woman is gone, vanished right in front of the audience.

◆ **THE SECRET:** The secret is in the couch (remember the couch from the above trick description?) and the rest of the effect depends on a mesh-like screen which is shaped like the assistant's body.

As soon as the assistant lies down on the couch, the performer picks up the cloth which will be used to cover her. While this is taking place, the body mesh or screen is lowered on invisible wires over the assistant's entire body. Because the body mesh is clear, it is not seen by members of the audience. This movement is done by someone behind or off in the stage wings. The body mesh is molded to resemble a woman and is attached by four strings of invisible thread to a location controlled by another assistant. When the performer covers the woman with the cloth, it is the screen which is really being covered.

As soon as the woman is fully covered, she secretly slips into a hidden compartment in the couch. After the couch is removed to a backstage area, the woman gets off the couch.



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Because the couch has played such a small role in the effect, most people forget about it.

The shape of the screen leads everyone to believe that the woman can still be seen from the audience. In reality, the trick is already done. Now the performer merely plays out his or her part.

Meanwhile, the offstage assistant watches the moves of the performer, lowering or raising the cloth covered screen as per the performer's commands. When the cloth is whisked away, the invisible screen can't be seen by the audience.

The body screen seems invisible for a couple of reasons. First the background or backdrop is dark. Black is best. The mesh is made of a nylon material which can also be black or transparent. Either way, the audience is unable to distinguish the mesh from the dark background.

At the conclusion of the trick, it is usually a good idea to have the offstage assistant raise the uncovered screen completely up and out of view. This is done so the stage area remains clear.

In some cases, I have seen the body mesh look more like a mold, covered in a black velvet material exactly matching the backdrop. This black velvet mold is invisible to the audience as long as it is seen against a black velvet rear curtain.

**A WORD OF CAUTION:** This effect is difficult for television, because the television camera can often pick up the movements of the invisible wires and the mesh. But this effect is great for a full-stage presentation.

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## Flash Production

This effect is an illusion that works on a principle similar to the dollhouse production (see Dollhouse Illusion on page 48). On the center of the stage stands a cabinet which is six feet tall with a top and a bottom. The top is supported by four metal posts running from base to top. The perimeter is two feet by two feet. The performer steps all around and through

the cabinet to show that it is empty and free from trickery. One by one, blinds are closed on each side of the cabinet until the cabinet is completely closed in. On the top of the cabinet is placed a peaked roof. Now nothing can enter from this direction as well.

Then comes a flash of smoke and fire, the front blind winds up, and there in the booth is the performer's assistant.

◆ **THE SECRET:** This is a simple illusion to build and to operate. As mentioned in the beginning, this illusion works on the same principle as the Dollhouse. The assistant is hiding behind the peaked roof. The roof is standing on its end, just next to the cabinet. While the front and sides are being closed in, the assistant secretly crawls into the cabinet. Then the back is closed, followed by the roof being placed on top of the cabinet. The flash is created by a flash pot, smoke pot, or smoke bomb, whichever the performer wishes to use.

This type of illusion is great for the new and young performer. First of all, it is easy to build, easy to use and really entertains. Often it is a good idea to produce the birthday child, or the child's parent, etc. A small, personal crowd loves seeing one of their own in the act.

The base and the top are made exactly the same. Primarily it is made of plywood. In each corner there are brackets which are screwed into the plywood. The brackets are used to set the corner posts. I use the aluminum tubing posts available from most lumber or plumbing stores. The posts are each six feet tall. You will need four of them, one for each corner.

Regular window blinds can be used for the sides, although I have seen the illusion using sides made of cloth, hooked at the top and velcroed at the bottom. The front can be Velcro® at top and bottom. When the flash pot is fired, the assistant can either tear the front section free or have the blind spring up.

The top can be the same one used for the Dollhouse Illusion, but only if the dollhouse is not going to be used in the same show. The audience may get suspicious if they see the same roof again. Placing the roof on top should be done very nonchalantly. You don't want to mention it or bring any attention to this part of the act.

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This is one case where both base, top and sides can be elaborately decorated or painted in a humorous or unusual manner. Painting it to resemble a phone booth can work as well. It depends on your act.

Production illusions are a good way to begin your act. Remember that whoever is to be produced must be hiding until this trick is performed.

You may also consider placing caster wheels on the base. Once the assistant is safely aboard, you can spin the cabinet around, adding to the show and allowing you to spend more time on the trick.

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## Black Art Magic

Performing this kind of magic is no doubt the closest one comes to doing an act of real magic, and yet it is one of the easiest kinds of illusions to perform.

The magician enters the stage wearing a white outfit. Slowly the lights go down. In the end, the audience sees only the magician because he or she is dressed in a white outfit and the stage now is dark. The performer then commands any desired item to appear, float and then disappear. People, animals, flowers, tables—everything and anything the magician wants seems to appear, vanish or float at a command. But the performer goes even further by sawing a woman in half as she stands before the audience. Each half then moves about the stage on its own. Eventually the performer may put the halves back together, or may simply make them vanish.

There is absolutely no end to what the performer can do. In the end, the lights come back up and the performer can either be on stage alone again, or the stage now can be completely filled with the magical appearances of all the items from the show.

◆ **THE SECRET:** This field of magic has all but been abandoned in today's performances. To me, it seems that present-day magicians are looking for more mechanical tricks, so they do not



need to perform as much, or work as hard. However, someone may soon perform this style of magic again.

The staging is the main concern. The back curtain or backdrop is flat black. The performer is dressed in white, or some other light-colored outfit. The performer should also wear a mask or have his or her face touched up with makeup. Hands should be gloved or covered in makeup. This will make the performers hand and face stand out starkly against the black backdrop. That's because, in the dark, with only black lighting shining on the stage, everything which is black is unseen by the audience. Everything which glows in a black light will be seen by the audience.

During the late sixties and early seventies, black light-sensitive posters and art had a great comeback. The poster would seem to shine in the darkness of the black light. Elements not visible in the light of day would become visible with the black lights shining on them.

To make anything appear, just have your black-clad assistants carry them onto the stage. Because the assistants are completely dressed in black, and their faces and hands are black, they are not seen by the audience. The object they carry will seemingly float onto the stage. Or you can reach behind the curtain's center, where two curtains meet, and produce the objects.

If the object is black on one side and black light-sensitive on the other, you can carry it onto the stage and make it appear and disappear simply by turning it around. People, too, can vanish and appear if they hide behind a cloth of black or a board painted black. Incidentally, adding a strobe light gives an even more amazing effect. However, I wouldn't suggest having the strobe light on too much or too often. Repeated use of the light hurts the eyes. The constant flashing light turns the stage into a wave of movement.

To float someone, have an assistant lie down on a black plywood board. Then have two of your black-clad assistants lift the board. The assistant is then floating and can float right off the stage into the wings.

Because your act is limited only by your creativity, you should let your imagination go wild. Forget about traditional



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magic. You won't need tricks. Just look at your stage as your land of imagination, a place where anything can happen.

I have had the opportunity to perform in black light and to see a black light performance. It is truly the most amazing sight to behold. The magic of items appearing and vanishing and objects floating in mid-air astounds the audience. It is really amazing!

Strangely, the effect is lost on you, the performer. When you perform black art effects, you can see everything on the stage because you are so close to the action. You may forget how dramatic it all looks to the audience. Try to keep in mind that black art is truly the most magnificent artistic form of magic. You will appreciate it more if you have your show videotaped. The video allows you to review the show and to appreciate it not as a participant, but from the perspective of an observer.

As a television spectacle, black art magic is truly well-fitted. Why? The set which you work can be totally dark, while the people at home are in whatever light they choose. Doing black art magic on television is the next best thing to trick photography. The camera only sees what you want it to see. Black art is truly the cleverest and easiest magic to perform.

But beware: Black art illusions are obviously not meant for close-up or for small shows of any type. And fire regulations may restrict the amount of darkness. You may also have trouble finding a club which is willing to turn the lights so low.

A way to combat the club's skittishness is to have low lighting facing away from the stage area and into the audience. This arrangement will actually enhance the invisibility of the act. However, this illusion, when performed in total darkness, has effects which are truly eerie.

Black art is labor-intensive, but this problem can be overcome by using backdrops which hide your props.

The best illusions in black art include making objects or people float, appear, and vanish, then magically be transposed from place to place on the stage. The act can end with the magician causing him or herself to slowly vanish from the ground up or to simply float away off the stage. To vanish from the ground up, have an assistant cover the magician with

## Howard Thurston

a black mini-curtain, the size of a large bath towel. The magician moves to a location just behind the curtain which is lying on the stage. The assistant moves behind the magician, reaches around and slowly pulls the curtain up to wherever the performer desires. The result is that whatever part of the illusionist's body is being covered looks as though it has disappeared.

However you decide to end this act, you must clearly script what you will do and maintain the script. A story line or play line would be suggested. You could even use a children's fairy tale as the script. Just because the act is in the dark, don't be afraid to talk to the audience during the show. The effect of your voice will be greatly amplified because the stage is black. Your audience will be more focused on what you are saying because they will be limited to what they are seeing. The lessening of one sense heightens another, a fact you can use to your benefit.



# Harry Keller

## Master Magician

The eleven-year-old boy was tired as he trudged the last quarter mile along the dusty road outside of Buffalo, New York. He was worried. Nervously he glanced at the crumpled newspaper ad that he carried in his hand. It read: "Wanted: Boy to work as assistant for the Fakir of Ava."

That advertisement was several days old, and he knew that by now the job was probably filled. If so, the boy would have come for nothing. But he walked on through a pair of iron gates, toward an imposing house, where a small black and tan dog came bounding toward him. The boy was patting the dog, which was responding with appreciative whines, when an austere man with a broad mustache and a tiny goatee stepped out on the veranda.

He was Isaiah Harris Hughes, the famous magician who called himself the Fakir of Ava. He inquired if the boy had come for the job and when the boy nodded, Hughes asked his name. The boy gave it: "Harry Keller," he said. Smiling, Hughes told him that the job was his, for a very simple reason: Dozens of boys had already applied, but the little dog had snapped and snarled at all of them. Hughes had decided he would hire the first boy the dog liked. That happened to be young Harry Keller, who was going to change the spelling of his name and his life as a result of this meeting.

The terms amounted to a few dollars a month, with room, board and traveling expenses included, all that a boy could want around the time of the American Civil War. From the outset, young Harry reveled in the job. Once hired, he was promptly taken backstage, where he was rehearsed in the



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working of the magical equipment that had been set up by his new employer.

It was a still greater thrill when they started on the road a few weeks later, and Harry found himself sharing the stage with the renowned Fakir of Ava, who, despite his Oriental title, performed in the conventional full-dress tuxedo attire worn by the modern magicians of the time.

Harry enjoyed hearing the Fakir's tales of wizardry while they waited at railroad junctions, rode cross-country in stage-coaches, or sat in comfortable hotel rooms between shows. But sharing the stage with the world-known Fakir was even more wonderful. It was Harry's job to go down into the audience and borrow a hat into which the Fakir tossed coins that he plucked out of the air; later the hat was used for cooking a magic omelet. Harry also asked for rings and watches, which the magician vanished in various ways and caused to reappear in equally mysterious fashion.

After several seasons, Harry decided to start out as a magician on his own. He soon changed the spelling of his name to "Kellar," to distinguish himself from Heller, a noted magician of the time. But it was hard for a newcomer to succeed, so he took a temporary job as an assistant with the Davenport Brothers, a pair of mystery workers who convinced great crowds of gullible persons that they were genuine spirit mediums.

Later, Kellar worked with a company called the Royal Illusionists, who opened a three-week engagement in San Francisco on May 15, 1876, and later headed westward on a tour of the Orient. Kellar's magical performance and his version of many of the Davenport tricks won him fame in many lands. He even put on a command performance before King Thibaw of Burma, in the royal palace of Ava. Afterward, Kellar mailed a copy of the program to his old friend and tutor, Isaiah Hughes, who had retired and was living comfortably in his home near Buffalo.

Though Kellar's travels were a success, his greatest goal was to present his own big magic show on the American stage. After eight years of globe-trotting, he reached London. He bought some new and unusual illusions, among them an

## Harry Kellar

automatic figure of human size, called Psycho, which played a game of whist with persons from the audience. During his career, Kellar's personality underwent as many changes as his magic. As he grew older, he adopted a certain austerity and grew a large, bushy mustache, giving him a professional appearance reminiscent of the Fakir of Ava.

After Kellar retired, he built a home in southern California and constructed a miniature theater where he tried out new magical effects, including an improved levitation. Often he had the urge to return to the road, but only once did he emerge from retirement. That was during World War I, when he headlined a benefit performance given by magicians at the New York Hippodrome.

By then, Kellar was considered the dean of magic, and many of this fellow wizards felt that "Kellar Day," as they termed the event, should be celebrated annually. Curiously, the wish was prophetic, for the date happened to be November 11, 1917. Exactly one year later, the Armistice was signed, ending World War I, so Kellar Day has fallen on a holiday ever since. Few magicians today observe Kellar Day.

Following that final public appearance, Kellar continued to give private performances in his little theater daily, until a brief illness ended in his death on March 10, 1922.

## Dollhouse Illusion

This type of illusion has always been part of the magician's bag of tricks.

The performer enters the stage area carrying a part of the dollhouse. The house is in three sections: The roof, the front with side section, and the back with side section. Each piece will be picked up by the performer and shown inside and out. The performer will then put the parts together, forming a dollhouse. The completed house will be three feet tall (at the peak of the roof), two feet wide (the front of the house) and three feet deep (the length of the sides).

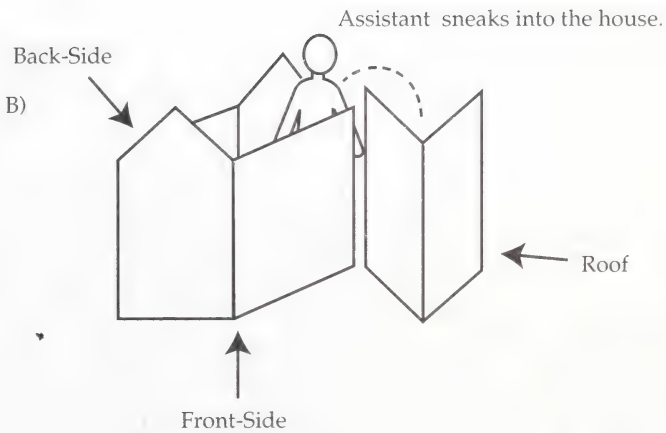
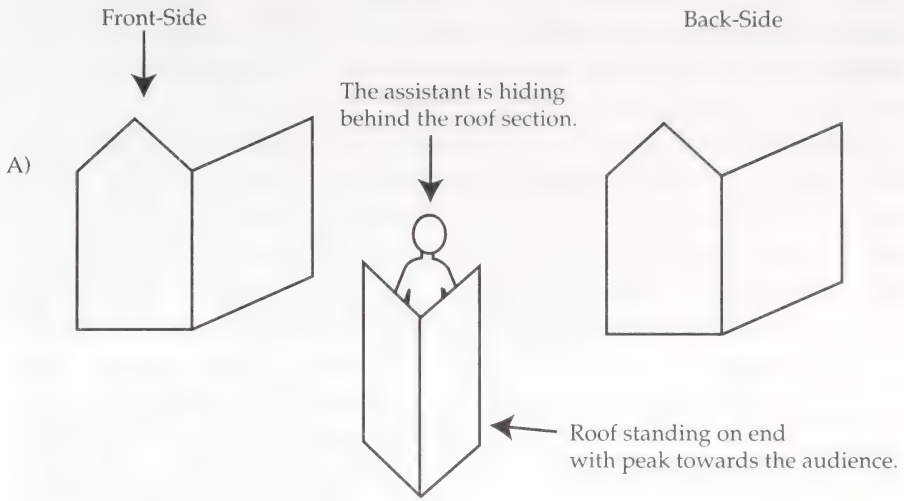
Once the house has been assembled, it can be moved around to show that there is no funny business going on. At the performer's command, the roof pops off the house and out steps one or two people depending on the performer's wishes. It is an easy way to produce the assistant. Sometimes the assistant will produce the magician. Although this trick is called the Dollhouse Illusion, it can be painted to resemble a train engine, bus, schoolhouse, car, etc. No trap doors or special stage settings are required for this effect.

◆ **THE SECRET:** This effect takes timing and coordination from both the performer and those who are to be magically produced. When the performer enters the stage with one part of the dollhouse, the other two parts are already on the stage. The roof is standing on its end so that the roof peak is facing the audience. In this position, someone could be hiding behind the roof but would be unseen by the audience.

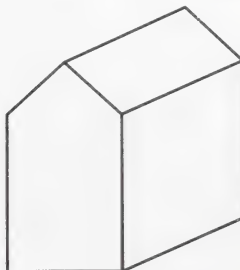
The back-side section is leaning up against the peaked roof section. The section carried by the performer is the front-side section. If the stage has curtains, or wings, have the roof section standing close enough that someone could crawl from the wing or curtain to the hiding space behind the roof without being seen.

If the stage has no curtain or wing, then the person who is to be produced must be behind the roof until they are pro-

# Harry Kellar



C) The house is now fully assembled.





## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

duced. As an alternative, you can drag the roof out while the hidden person crawls along behind the roof. Then go back for the next piece and lean it against the roof. Finally, return with the next and last piece of the house.

With the three pieces all on stage, the performer opens the front-side section. The performer shows it front and back, then sets it up, just next to the roof section. Then the performer picks up the back-side section, shows it all around, then places this part next to the front-side section. The performer begins to hook the front section to the side section (see drawing B). At this point, there will be space between the end section and the house for those who will be produced to crawl into the house unseen. Once the front of the house has been connected and the people have crawled into the house, the performer walks to the rear of the house for the final hookup. Then the performer picks up the roof, shows it all around and then places it upon the house. The house now is fully assembled (drawing C).

In this position, the person or people to be produced are safely concealed in the house. The performer can shift the house to the center of the stage and spin it around. In moving the house, the performer must be careful not to move quickly, because the house occupants must crawl along at the same speed. Remember: When spinning the house around, make sure you spin it without moving it from its center spot. This way the production people only have to remain in one spot while the house spins around them.

When it is time to produce the person or people, the performer can tap on the house. The people within the house only have to stand up and they will lift the roof off the house as they stand. The roof then will fly off, back over the rear of the house and out of the way, usually falling flat onto the stage. The performer then disconnects the front of the house so the production people can walk out onto the stage. This action will also reveal that the house is now empty.

This illusion is simply constructed and can be performed alike by the raw beginner or the most accomplished professional. Corrugated cardboard can be used for the house material. Tape can be used to connect the sections together. An elas-

tic band on the front, and another at the back, can be used to connect the front-side and back-side sections together during the performance. The roof section simply sits or rests on the top of the assembled house.

This illusion may sound like a simple effect, but it astonishes audiences when done with great showmanship and flair.

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## Circle, Square and Square, Circle

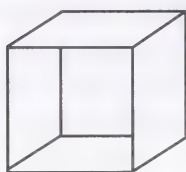
This trick is a basic principle of magic. The methodology can be used for many different effects, both close up and stage.

The performer shows a large square box with four sides but without a top or bottom. It is held up to the audience and they can see right through the opening. Also shown is a cylinder-shaped box (the circle) which has neither a top nor a bottom. It, too, is shown to be empty. The circle is placed over the square and with the right word, out pops an assistant, magically.

◆ **THE SECRET:** This trick can be made small for close up with medium-sized audiences or huge for the larger auditorium stages. You can make objects or people appear or disappear, depending only upon the size of the circle and square. The trick is made up of a cylinder and a box. The cylinder is large enough to fit over the box, completely covering it. Neither box or cylinder have a top or bottom. The cylinder and the box are not altered. In the simplest form of this illusion, the person or object which is going to appear is already inside the cylinder which stands on a table or in the middle of the stage, depending on the size of the illusion. The box is shown to be empty. It is then placed inside the cylinder. Then the cylinder is lifted and shown to be empty, but now the person or object is hidden by the box. He or she has waited there since the beginning of the performance—so do this trick early in the evening. When the cylinder is replaced over the box, the tricky part is done. From the audience's point of view, you have shown both box and cylinder to be empty.

## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

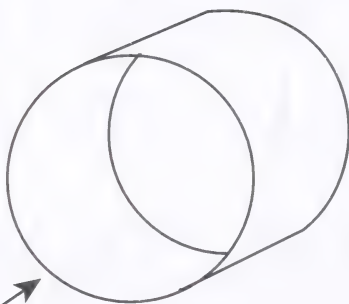
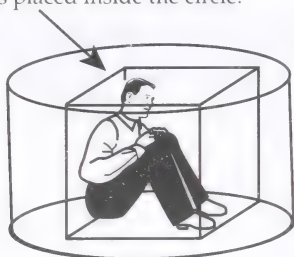
- 1) Square is shown to be empty.  
It has no top or bottom.



Assistant is hiding in the circle.

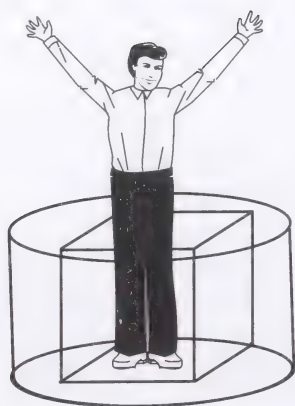


- 2) Square is placed inside the circle.



- 3) Circle is shown to be empty.  
Assistant is now hiding in the square.

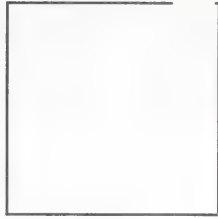
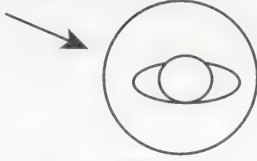
- 4) Circle is placed over square.  
Assistant magically appears.



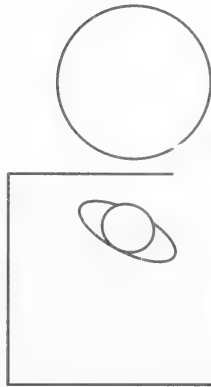
# Harry Kellar

## Overhead View

1) Assistant in circle.



2) Assistant crawls into square.  
Circle is removed.



3) Square is hooked together when circle is placed in square.  
Then the assistant can pop out.



## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

**VARIATIONS:** The box has a window cut into it. Without bringing too much attention to this fact, remove the brightly-colored cylinder (if this is how you have decorated it) from over the box. The window will now show what appears to be the dark inside of the box. Then replace the cylinder and lift the box. Both were shown empty. So where was the person or object? There is an inner cylinder (inside the box) which the audience does not and cannot see, because it is always hidden inside either the box or the square or both, depending on whether one or both is on stage. The inner cylinder is smaller in diameter than the colored cylinder and it is painted flat black, the same color as the inside of both the box and the colored cylinder.

When the audience sees through the window after the colored cylinder has been removed, they are actually looking at the exterior or the inner cylinder and not the inside of the box. When done in this version, the illusion can be viewed in the round without having any trouble spots for the performer.

Another concept is to have the square fit over the cylinder rather than vice versa. Of course, this arrangement would make the inner hiding place a square rather than a circle. Confused yet? Wait, there's more.

Another version is to perform this effect like that of the Dollhouse Illusion. Only one cylinder and one box or square is used. The person is hidden in the cylinder, which is placed behind the square. The square is not attached on all sides, in fact the back and one side are open and ajar. When you begin, lift the square and show it to be empty. When you replace it to the stage, you place it directly in front of the circle. The back of the square, a four-sided piece of cardboard, is left open. When you lift the circle, the person who will soon appear crawls into the square from his or her hiding place inside the circle. Then you place the circle into the square and over the soon-to-appear assistant. Spin the box around and hook up the back and side. Then out pops the assistant.

If the illusion is made for table size, you can produce a rabbit or scarves or any number of items.

Whether performed on a big or small scale, this one is a basic staple of magic.

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## S-Suspension

This illusion was often seen in sideshow tents or traveling circuses. It is still used now and again for photo shoots, most notably by Doug Henning for a rooftop shot and Mark Wilson for his front cover on Magic Magazine.

On the center of the stage, a board is resting on the back of two opposite-facing chairs. The assistant or a member of the audience is invited to lie down on the board. First one chair, then the second, is removed. The board is seemingly floating in midair. A large hoop is passed over the board and the assistant to prove that no wires are used. The chairs are replaced and the assistant steps down.

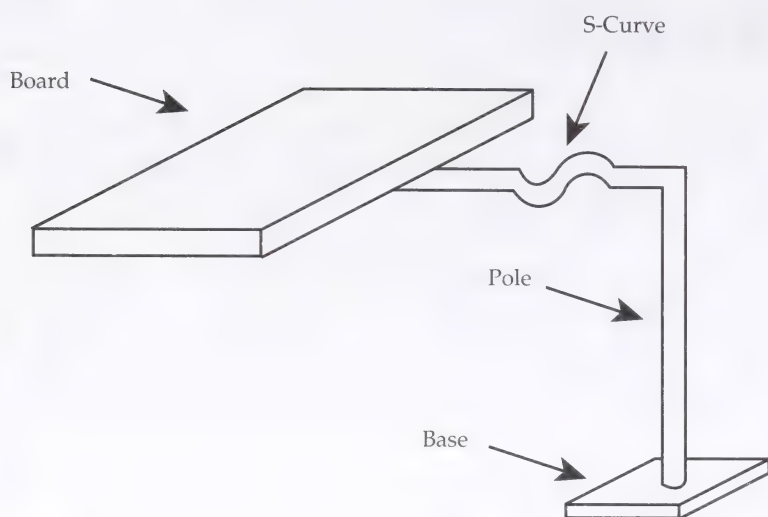
This illusion is simple, smooth and easy to operate. It is an inexpensive illusion that many young or amateur performers miss out on. This is because many feel it is an outdated trick. I would suggest this one be the first illusion for a new magician to perform on stage.

◆ **THE SECRET:** The board is secretly held up by a metal pole which is connected between the floor and the suspended board. The pole is either planted directly into the floor of the stage or it is connected to a base resting on the floor. The pole runs up from the floor to a height of about thirty inches. At this point it will turn (bend) parallel to the floor and connect to the board. On the way to the board, the parallel arm sometimes will be bent in the shape of an S or Z, creating the name of the illusion.

Although it is not necessary for the arm to be bent in this manner, it was done for the convenience of moving the hoop or ring around the floating board.

The performer stands behind the board and conceals the upright pole between his or her legs. A drape on the front of the board hangs down to the floor of the stage. Once the performer takes a position behind the illusion and hides the upright pole between his or her legs, the magician does not move from this spot. Once the performer is in position, the assistant

## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

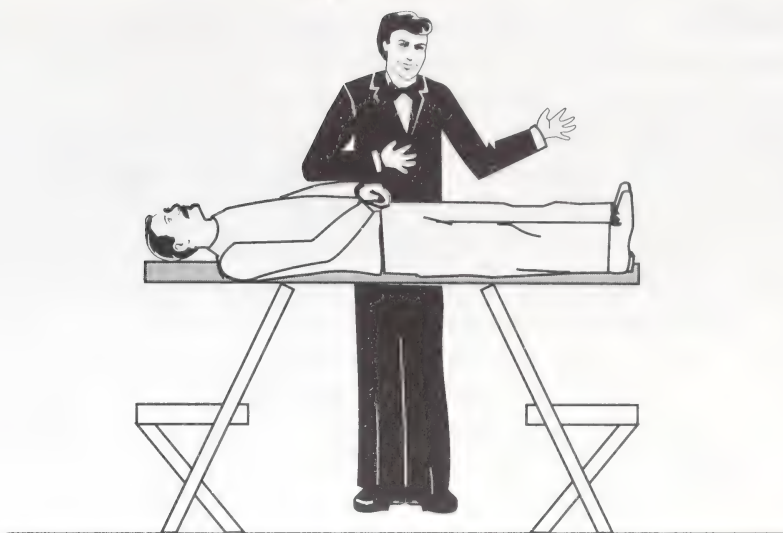


will lie down on the board. The performer then reaches around the board and folds the drape upward, covering the assistant. Then the chairs are removed and the assistant seemingly floats. The magician then passes a hoop over the floating subject.

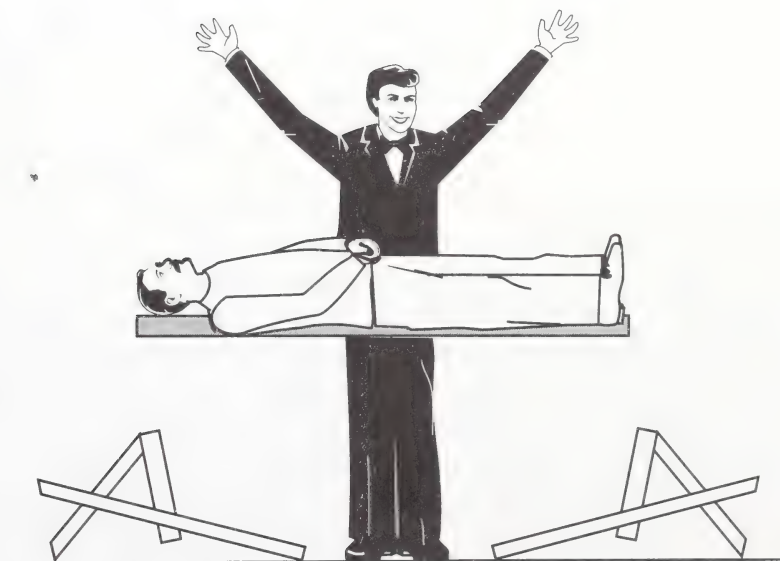
Once the hoop-pass has been accomplished, the drape is lowered, the chairs are replaced and the assistant steps down. Oh the wonders of magic...

In the days of vaudeville and traveling shows, circus people commonly performed this illusion, rather than magicians. It may not sound like much, or look like much, but under the right circumstances it can be effective. This will do well for children's shows. I wouldn't suggest building a show around it, since it is such a quickly performed trick but it can fit nicely into some shows.

## Harry Kellar



↑  
The performer stands behind the board  
and conceals the upright pole between his/her legs.



↑  
When the chairs are removed the assistant floats.



## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

**AUTHOR'S NOTE:** When I first began magic I was eager to perform anytime, anywhere. A circus came to town and needed locals to help with rides. During their stay in our town, I operated several of the rides. One day I had the opportunity to work this trick at the sideshow. My employer liked my technique so much that he moved me off rides and onto the sideshow on a permanent basis for the balance of the summer. Not bad for a twelve year old. At fifty cents an hour, I had just become a professional entertainer.

Later when I was in junior high school, my first Metal Shop project was to build my own S-Suspension. Not only did I get a good mark from my teacher, but I also had a professional trick to show others.

# Harry Houdini

## The Escape Artist

Houdini, the world's greatest escape artist and internationally known magician, was born in Appleton, Wisconsin on April 6, 1875. The son of Rabbi Mayer Samuel Weiss, the young Houdini, or as he was known as a young lad, Erich Weiss, began conjuring as a hobby at age six. Houdini chose to change his name from Erich Weiss because of his magical idol, Robert Houdin. Adding the "i" made Houdini feel that he was "like" Houdin.

One of Houdini's first tricks was making a dried pea appear under one of three cups. The trick was known as the Pea Shell Game (see Pea Shell Game page 68). Between the ages of seven and seventeen, Houdini had many part-time and full-time jobs. He worked at locksmithing, shoe shining, tie cutting and newspaper delivering. In his free time, he always practiced magic.

The most clever part of Houdini's early performance was his circus-style legerdemain. A circus-style show is doing a single trick or illusion, then moving onto juggling, for example, or some other feat of dexterity. His work with handcuffs was less successful because the audience believed he was using fake handcuffs, which was not the case. Not until later years did he learn the importance of being spectacular as well as being an expert. Circus-like shows were brazen, abrupt and without flourish. In 1891, Harry Houdini and his brother Theo began working as the Brothers Houdini. They had practiced all through 1890 and were now ready to take their show on the road. Not that it was much of a show: Magic tricks were expensive and hard to come by and they had very few tricks.

## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

The trick that the Brothers Houdini highlighted was the “Metamorphosis” (also known as the “Substitution Trunk”). This was a version of the trick first performed by the magician John Maskelyne back in 1864. In the Houdini version, Theo would have his hands tied and then be locked in the wooden box. Harry would get on top of the box and pull the curtain around the whole setup. At the count of three, Theo would whisk the curtain away and be standing on top of the box where just moments ago Harry had stood. The box would then be opened and there, tied up, was Harry Houdini.

All the practice in the world could not pay the bills. Harry and Theo tried everything they could to get paying jobs, but talking to agents and going around to the local clubs proved to be fruitless. By the summer of 1892, Harry began to have doubts about performing. Compounding this problem was the fact that his father was becoming ill. Rabbi Weiss died in October of 1892, leaving Harry Houdini as the provider for his mother, brother and sister. Houdini was almost eighteen years old.

The Brothers Houdini went on the road looking for work and found it in Chicago, Illinois. They quickly became well-known for the Metamorphosis all along the sideshow circuit. While working for around \$10 per week, Houdini began to learn the art of lock-picking from a local Chicago merchant, and he also began to think of ways to use the art of lock-picking in his act. The first locks he would escape from would be the locks on police handcuffs. He would challenge local cops to cuff him and then he would escape.

In the spring of 1894, while performing in New York, Houdini met Bess, the woman who would soon become his wife. They were married in June of 1894 after a very short engagement. Soon after their marriage, Theo left the act to work on his own while Harry and Bess went on to become The Houdinis.

Finally, in 1898, Houdini’s break came with some wonderful newspaper coverage he managed to get for his escape abilities. From there he was able to gain steady work as a magician and escape artist. Houdini’s career took off in 1899, as he and Bess set sail for Europe. The European stage had never

## Harry Houdini

seen anything like the Houdinis. Their act now consisted of a little magic and a great deal of escapeology. Of course, the Metamorphosis was still the act's closer.

As his reputation grew in Europe, Houdini became homesick for America. When he returned to the United States, he was a very big star and commanded the highest fees ever paid to a magician. He headlined wherever he performed.

One day in his dressing room in Montreal, Canada, a student who had heard that Houdini could receive hard blows on the stomach without feeling discomfort, struck two or three experimental blows on the unprepared Houdini. At fifty years of age, Houdini did not have the same stomach strength he had as a youth. The punches ruptured an already injured appendix, and Harry Houdini died several days later in Detroit, Michigan on Halloween, 1926.

Although married, Houdini and his wife Bess were never able to have children. The legend of Houdini lives on primarily because of the mystery surrounding the man's life and the mystery he created. Unlike performers of his time, Houdini was always creating publicity stunts which would be seen by as many people as possible and be well-recorded in the daily newspapers. His most famous feats featured his hanging upside down from the tallest buildings or bridges, while escaping from a straitjacket.

His life was covered in the press almost daily for the first quarter of the 20th century, garnering headlines that his fellow performers envied. These recurrent stories, citing one spectacular illusion after another, would make for an exciting soap opera. Over and over again, Houdini, the courageous hero, met the experts' challenges and overcame them by what seemed superhuman means.

Houdini, revered by millions worldwide, was so popular he even had his name appear in the dictionary of his day. To "Houdinize" was to release or extricate oneself from confinement—handcuffs, straitjackets and the like. Although his name no longer appears in dictionaries, it is still a household word in our language, contained in record books, encyclopedias, and in any discussion about magical illusions, amazing tricks, or mysteries of the unknown.



## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

He escaped from every conceivable cell or device society could devise or dream up. However, he has not escaped from our minds. The Great Houdini is forever.

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## Substitution Trunk

This illusion has been a career-maker for more performers than any other trick. Perhaps Harry Houdini was the first to become famous for performing this one.

A large crate is in center stage. A group from the audience inspect it closely, looking for trap doors or any other means of escape. Then the committee handcuffs the assistant. Once handcuffed, the assistant is placed into a sack, whose mouth is tied. The committee places the assistant into the crate and closes the lid. Along the lid of the crate there are several clasps. Padlocks are inserted into the clasps to lock the lid firmly in place. Then the box is wrapped all around with rope and chains. The chains are also locked in place. All the while, the performer is watching the work take place.

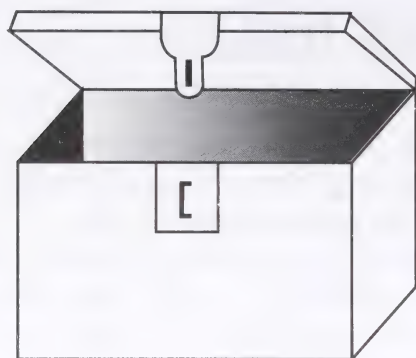
Once the work is finished, the group steps back from the crate. The performer picks up a curtained hoop and, with the curtain in hand, climbs on top of the crate. He or she holds the hoop in his or her arms, allowing the curtain to fall as far as the top of the crate, concealing the area from the performer's waist, down to the top half of the crate. The illusion is ready to begin.

The performer counts "One," then "Two." Each time the performer counts, the curtain is brought up over his head, while the top of the crate is still hidden by the curtain. On the count of "Three," the performer drops the curtain. Where once the performer stood, on top of the crate, the assistant now stands, a change of place which occurs in only three seconds.

The crate is then untied, unchained, unlocked, and then opened. The sack is untied and inside is the performer, who is handcuffed but now has a different set of clothes on. A true metamorphosis, right before the eyes of both the audience and the stage committee.

◆ **THE SECRET:** First of all, the crate is rigged. One side of the top panel is able to swing into the crate. (In some cases a trunk is used; in others it is a packing crate. Either can be

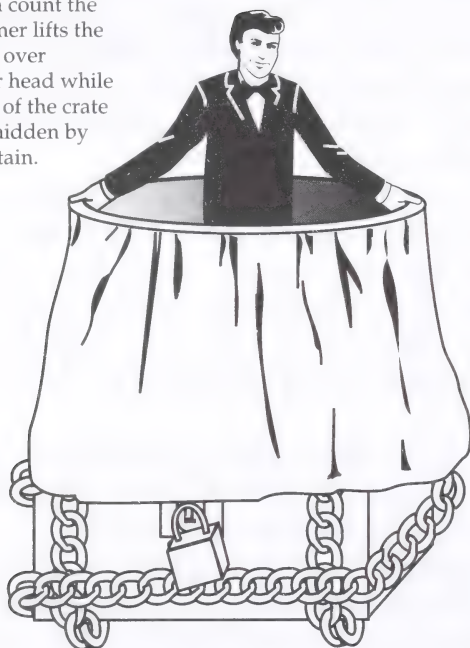
## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed



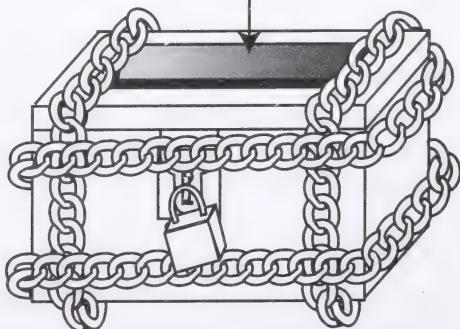
A group from the audience inspects the crate closely, looking for trap doors. The rigging on the top panel cannot be detected due to creative carpentry.

The performer counts "One," then "Two."

At each count the performer lifts the curtain over his/her head while the top of the crate is still hidden by the curtain.



One side of the top panel is able to swing into the crate.



used.) The rigging usually can't be detected due to creative carpentry. A good carpenter will be able to hide the secret, as revealed in the illustrations. Also, most people look for ways to open the crate out, not in. Remember, all the chains and rope on the outside of the box will not keep the lid from falling inward, as it is designed to, or keep the assistant from then climbing out through the chains and rope onto the crate.

Let's begin with the handcuffs. They can either be dummy cuffs, which are easily opened by the assistant, or the key can be in the assistant's pocket. No one thinks of this illusion as an escape trick. The sack can be of a gimmicked nature, such as a sack without a bottom. Or, as the assistant is being tied up, she can poke her hand into the neck of the sack. This way, the rope is tied around both the assistant's hand and the neck of the bag. Remove the hand and the bag tie becomes loose.

This illusion only seems as though it requires a scant three seconds. In reality, by the time the crate is locked, then tied and roped, several minutes have elapsed. The assistant is out of the handcuffs and the bag long before the crate is even secure.

As soon as the performer gets on top of the crate, the assistant drops open the lid section and crawls out onto the crate. The assistant stays hidden behind the curtain along with the performer.

As the performer counts "One" and "Two," the assistant takes hold of the curtain and the performer drops down into the crate. When the count "Three" is heard, the performer closes the lid door and the assistant is revealed to the audience. While the curtain is still in place and the audience is taking in the surprise, the performer makes certain that the lid is back in place.

The assistant jumps off the crate and the committee begins undoing it. During this time the performer is changing clothes, putting on the handcuffs and getting back into the sack.

This illusion is a trick which requires a great deal of practice by both the performer and the assistant. When the two of them share the top space of the lid, there is not much room.

When timing the appearance onto the lid by the assistant and the dropping of the curtain by the assistant, all movements must be smooth and clean.



## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

Breakaway clothes and outfits really make this illusion sparkle. This effect is especially true when the new costume is clearly different from the first one. This way your audience won't miss the outfit change, especially because the shed clothes remain inside the trunk.

This one can be performed inside a theater or out on the street. It is angle-proof and really spectacular to see when performed properly.

Once again, the crate or trunk should not be too flashy. The less obvious the prop, the more realistic the illusion.

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## Walking Through a Brick Wall

It does not matter if you use this illusion to walk through a brick wall or the Great Wall of China. The effect is the same. You can do this trick outside or on the stage. Many fans of magic are familiar with David Copperfield walking through the Great Wall of China, but they may be surprised to learn that Harry Houdini really made this effect famous in the early nineteen hundreds.

The performer invites a large committee from the audience to inspect the wall through which the magician will walk. They will be given full opportunity to rap on the wall, check for hidden openings and otherwise inspect every aspect of the staging.

The magician will have the committee standing on both sides of the wall, watching every moment of the effect. At the appropriate time, the magician will approach the center of the wall. A group of assistants will assemble a three-part, opaque screen around the performer. The magician will wave his or her hands over the top of the screen for all to see. Just as quickly as the performer's hands go beneath the screen, the assistants completely remove and disassemble the screen. The magician appears to have vanished into the wall. The assistants then will move to the other side of the wall and reassemble the screen. Just as quickly the performer will be seen

in the screen, appearing to have walked through the wall. Once again the screen is quickly taken apart. Everything can be thoroughly re-inspected.

◆ **THE SECRET:** Houdini bought the rights to the original effect in May 1914. Just two months later, Houdini was doing his version in New York City. Soon after, many others followed with their own version of this effect. The illusion was a great success everywhere it was performed.

I will give the instructions for the most common and practical way of performing this trick:

The screen is made up of three sections. Each is roughly six feet tall and two feet wide. They are made similar to a picture frame, consisting of metal tubing covered with an opaque material. These three pieces need to be able to attach to each other in order to stand up. They are not too much out of the ordinary, but I will discuss them in a moment. The wall, the floor surrounding the wall, and everything else involved is not altered in any way.

The assistants wear worker's smocks, caps and eye glasses. All of them appear pretty much identical. There are always many assistants when this trick is performed, not to mention the committee on stage watching. This crowding effect makes for considerable and deliberate confusion on stage and around the wall.

When the magician is surrounded by the screen, he or she secretly puts on a smock, eyeglasses and cap. These items have been hidden in a secret pocket of the screen placed around the performer. Then, in the confusion, he or she slips out of the side panel and begins to mingle with the other workers, becoming lost in the crowd. Dummy hands, controlled by one of the assistants, are actually the hands seen waving by the audience. The hands are attached with spring steel wire to the inside of the screen, then controlled by a wire leading to one of the assistants. When the screen is taken apart, the dummy hands are tucked away by one or more of the assistants.

The magician is also part of the team putting the screen back together on the other side. At the right moment, he or

## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

she will slip into the new screen, remove the cap, smock and glasses, then emerge as if having gone through the wall. Once again, the assistants will hide all the disguise paraphernalia as they disassemble the screen.

All of this effect can be done within a matter of seconds; timing and teamwork is what is really needed. This type of effect takes great skill and ability to pull off. As with any illusion which uses many assistants, practice makes perfect.

As you can see, this is more a quick-change act than a magic act. But, in the end, it is good showmanship which prevails. Angles must be watched very carefully for this effect to have total impact. Use of lighting for illuminating the screen at the appropriate moment can make the effect actually look as though the magician is disappearing, then reappearing, through the wall.

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## Pea Shell Game

This game or trick was originally set up to be a gambling scam. Houdini used it to make money at first, but later performed it as a magic feat. It is intended to be used for magic, not gambling.

The performer shows three bottle caps. Under one cap the performer places a coin, then turns away from the audience. A spectator is asked to mix up the caps. When the performer turns back to the caps, he or she can tell instantly under which cap the coin is hidden.

◆ **THE SECRET:** The bottle caps can come from the top of any pop bottle. They should all be the same. The coin is the trick: It has a small dark hair secretly glued to it. The hair will invisibly protrude from under the cap because the trick is performed on a dark surface, and the dark hair will be hard to see. If you use clear glue, just a dab. That, too, becomes invisible. Once you have shown where the coin was hidden, pick it up and drop it into your pocket leaving the bottle caps on the table. Normally, the spectators will pick up the caps right



away for inspection. Should they ask for the coin again, reach into your pocket and hand them a duplicate coin previously placed in your pocket.

They will ask you to perform the trick again. Refuse. Tell them that a performer never shows the same trick to an audience more than once.

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## Houdini's Water Torture Cell

Contrary to popular myth, Harry Houdini did not die in or near this escape illusion. The Hollywood movie starring Tony Curtis would have you believing otherwise. This act was one of Houdini's greatest escape illusions.

The escape illusion takes place within a glass lined, phone booth-type cell or box. The performer's feet are first locked into a lid. Then the performer is lowered, headfirst, into the cell. The cell is then filled with water. Surrounding the cell are metal bars, the type you'd see on a jail cell.

The cell is about five feet five inches tall, while the sides are no more than thirty inches wide. This arrangement will make for a very tight fit for any performer. Of course, the performer's hands will be securely handcuffed prior to being lowered into the cell.

Through the glass front, the audience can clearly see the submerged performer. Then with the lid securely locked in place, a curtain is brought around the cell. Within a short period of time, the performer will throw back the curtain and stand free of the cell.

**CAUTION:** Don't try this one alone or without safety precautions—this illusion is a very dangerous escape, and many have drowned because they have done this trick unaided.

◆ **THE SECRET:** The performer must be able to hold his or her breath for at least three minutes while submerged under water and must be able to simultaneously unfasten the handcuffs. The handcuffs are specially designed in order to be re-



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leased the moment the curtain surrounds the performer. While underwater, the magician pushes the right spot on the cuffs in order to unfasten them.

Although the booth is a very tight squeeze, the performer has two methods of escape. One is the usual method, the second is an emergency backup.

The lid, which also acts as a locking system for the feet, is prepared with a release latch. In Houdini's day, the release was accomplished with the help of an assistant. The assistant, while covering the cell with the curtain, would secretly hit the release latch. The performer would then be free of the lid. Once free, the performer turns upright and removes the lid, emerging from the tank.

Remember, this effect is an illusion and not really considered an escape. A true escape is when the public challenges the performer with items which they can lock or tie on the performer. People from the audience are not invited up on stage to inspect the lid. The fact that the performer is upside down in water is enough to scare anyone into believing that escape is impossible.

If, for some reason, the help of the assistant does not work, the performer can turn upright in the small space and release the feet stock by hand.

As a safety valve, many modern-day escape artists will have a small air supply, much like that of a scuba diver, hidden on the bottom of the cell. Again, no one wants to die for the sake of an illusion.

When the performer is lowered into the cell in the first place, the body of the performer displaces a great deal of water, drenching the stage. The displaced water will allow the performer breathing space once he or she has turned upright in the tank.

In most cases, the performer never has to stay submerged for more than a few seconds because the front of the cell is the first part to be covered by the assistants. During the time they are fixing the curtains around the booth, the performer can and should be making the escape. If the timing is right, the performer can be out and standing behind the curtains even before the assistants leave the stage. To heighten the ef-

## Harry Houdini

fect, stand behind the curtains and wait for two or three minutes to pass before appearing. Houdini would often stagger through the curtains as he made his grand escape. That technique may be overacting, but if it works, go for it.

To make this cell today, I would suggest using a plexiglass or other similar plastic substance instead of glass. There is less danger of breakage and the material is stronger.

Because the whole escape depends on the lid, it should be a simple stock-like lid with an easy escape latch. One performer I know didn't try to hide the escape at all. His feet were locked into the stock-like lid, but the holes which his feet went through were so large that he was actually holding himself in place. He was literally hanging upside down by his feet. When the curtain closed, he just let himself out of the stocks, flipped upright and climbed out. I like this version the most.

**A FEW TIPS:** In order for the lid to be put into place, a block and tackle or other sort of device will be required.

The bars on the cell are optional. Some magicians think the jailhouse effect makes the trick look scarier. It is up to you.

To really liven this one up, I would build my cell to actually look like a telephone booth. People relate well to things they recognize. Remember, caution is the key word on this one.

This act is a real attention-getter. It is too bad the escape has to be covered with a curtain.



# Hardeen

## Brother of Houdini

Theo Hardeen was Theodore Weiss, Harry Houdini's younger brother by two years. To live in the shadow of a brother as famous as Harry Houdini would have been an impossible task for most, but Theo Hardeen did not let that hamper him. He carved out a successful career for himself. Theo's early life as an entertainer was motivated by his close association with his brother. As Houdini gathered fame through out the world, theater managers everywhere were pleading for the "Escape King" act. It was therefore natural that, when Houdini found he could not fill all of his engagements, he suggested to Theo they take different names and play in opposition to each other.

During the first ten years of the twentieth century, it was a tossup as to who had the greater drawing power, Houdini or Hardeen. Both brothers escaped from such unlikely devices as jails, boxes, handcuffs, straitjackets, chains and the like. No one else ever attained the great successes they had in this field. Houdini's name was better known in America only because Theo Hardeen chose to spend most of his time traveling and performing abroad.

After Houdini died, Hardeen continued to perform. Although he didn't need the money—he was already quite wealthy—there was a lure about show business which he could not resist. However, around the year 1940, his health started giving him problems and he decided to leave the road and play New York exclusively. He was featured for several weeks at Leon and Eddie's, one of New York City's finest night clubs of the time.



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It was about that time that Hardeen was asked to play a feature part as the magician in the Olsen and Johnson smash musical comedy Broadway show, "Hellzapoppin." He performed his larger illusions, with Olsen and Johnson zanily popping in and out of tricks such as sawing a woman in half, the dollhouse and the substitution trunk. Hardeen retired in the fall of 1944 and died on June 12, 1945.

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## Chair Suspension

This is the modern version of an impressive trick which was first seen in circus sideshows. Magicians often did not perform it because the sideshows generally didn't employ magicians: Sideshow roadies worked more cheaply. Today the illusion can be performed by even the youngest of magicians. It can be performed under any type of condition, even in the round. Often, performers will use a member of the audience. No special setup is needed for this completely self-enclosed illusion.

On the stage with the performer are two folding chairs. These chairs could have been on stage all through the show. Perhaps they were used when the performer had members of the audience on the stage with him. Or, the chairs can be brought onto the stage when the illusion is to take place.

The chairs are set up in the center of the stage, facing each other, about four feet apart. A heavy board is then placed across the back of the chairs. A person is requested to lie down on the board. This person can either be an assistant or someone from the audience. One of the chairs is then removed. The person and board appear to be suspended in mid-air. A hoop can then be passed over the person and down to the floor of the chair. The chair is replaced, the person is asked to step down and the board is then removed.

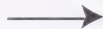
◆ **THE SECRET:** As with other suspensions, there is a gimmick in use. In this case, one of the chairs is reinforced with a metal bracket. The bracket runs down the back of the chair, then down the adjoining legs to the floor.

The board has a slot cut into one end of the board. This slot will be able to engage the chair's support bracket when placed across it. The support can hold up to 120 pounds.

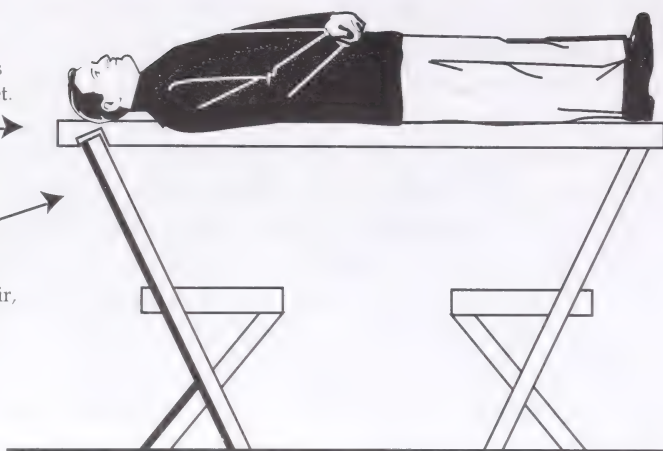
The action of slipping the board into the metal is a sliding motion, but a motion easily camouflaged while the magician sets the board on the chair.

## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

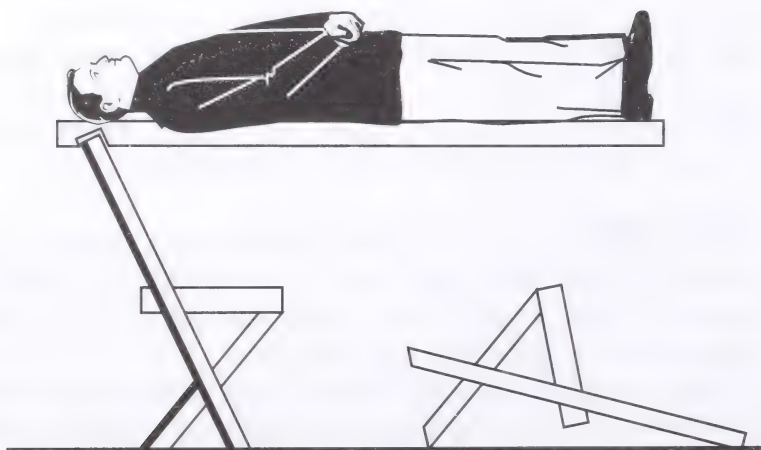
- 1) Slot in board engages chair's support bracket.



Metal bracket runs down the back of the chair, then down the adjoining legs to the floor.



- 2) One chair is removed and the assistant floats.



As a safety and professional precaution, the chair's metal bracket should be installed by a welder. It is also a good idea for the welder to reinforce the slot in the board with a metal retaining plate. Usually the boards themselves need to be quite strong, because the weight of a person could break a board which is too thin.

I suggest using wooden chairs rather than the aluminum type. Paint the chairs a bland color such as brown, and make sure that the metal is painted the same color. The board can be a brighter color. I used a board which had the color and logo of a sponsor. If you don't have a sponsor, you can request permission from a well-known company. This way the board looks more like a billboard than a specially-prepared magic prop.

Always remember, it is almost always better to use props that look like everyday items than it is to use shiny brightly-colored props. Misdirection works with props just as well as they work in the presentation of props.

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## Sawing a Woman in Half

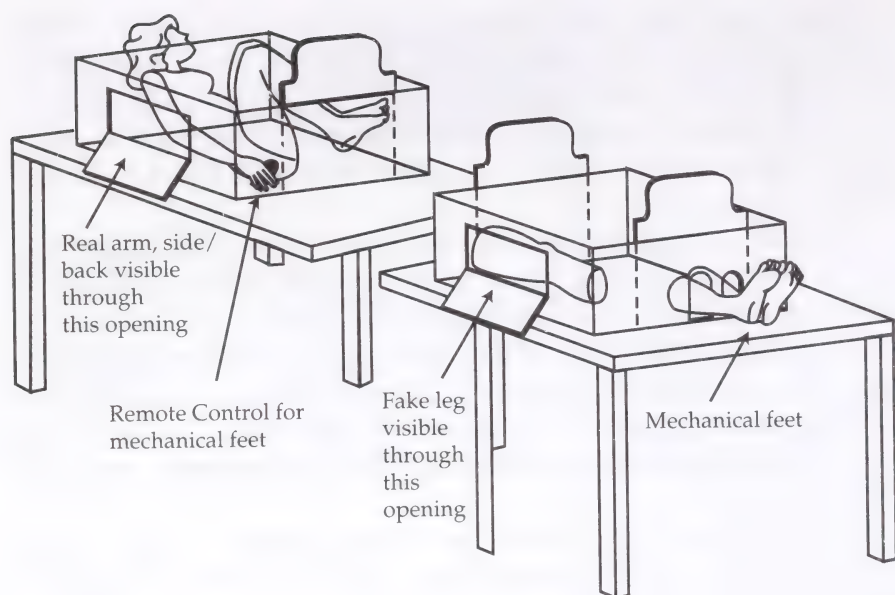
Several variations exist for this effect, as well as both the "thin model" and the "box model." I will explain the more modern "thin model."

The performer introduces a box on a table which is just large enough for the assistant, who lies flat in the box. His or her head protrudes from one end and the feet from the other end. Two small doors in the box which face the audience are opened to show the assistant's arm and leg. The doors are closed, and the box is sawed through the center. Two metal plates are then inserted into the box, one on either side of the cut. The "two" boxes are now separated.

Once separated, the two doors are once again opened. Through the open doors the audience can clearly see the assistant's arm and, in the other half, the assistant's leg. The feet continue to move. It is the perfect illusion.



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Eventually the halves are put back together and the assistant steps out of the box, looking unscathed by his or her experience.

◆ **THE SECRET:** The box is thin, compared to the old version. The box of the thin model is twelve inches high, while the older models were up to twenty four inches high. But the box is twenty five inches wide. The width gives sufficient room for the assistant to curl his or her legs up into the box which the audience thinks is holding only the head and trunk. The legs seen in the lower portion of the box are usually mechanical feet. The side of the leg seen through the open door is a body double fake, which is a mannequin leg piece glued into a small opening just inside the door of the box. When the door is open, the audience doesn't see into the box, but rather it sees the body double fake.

The feet, if mechanical, can be controlled by remote control. The assistant will operate the "joy stick" which will make the feet move. A less expensive illusion will merely use mannequin legs, which will not move.

Each box half is connected to a flat table which is on casters for ease of movement. The box halves are kept together with balsa or other type of soft wood. It is this wood which is cut, time after time, whenever the illusion is presented. The blades introduced into each side of the cut are to keep the audience from seeing into the box, a secret similar to the Zigzag, which will be explained later.

In Doug Henning's version of sawing the woman in half, he would put one of the blades in place, but it would not go all the way down. Then Doug would pull on the head of the assistant, and the blade would drop into place. This is show business, after all, and requires a good bit of acting.

Another version calls for two assistants to be cut in half at the same time. Then the bottoms of the two assistants seem to be mixed up when the reassembly takes place. If one assistant was dressed in blue, while the second was dressed in white, the assembled assistants would be dressed in both blue and white. This effect also makes for a good play on the original trick, and because returning the assistant to one piece is a

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bit anticlimactic, this mixup twist does put some more spark into the presentation of the trick.

This illusion and the Zigzag as well as the Mismatch (to be explained later) are all closely related. In fact, you could call them magic cousins. The Mismatch and the Zigzag are merely upright versions of cutting a woman in two. Or three. Or four.

I would not suggest a show which includes all three of these tricks. If you do use more than one of them in a show, make sure that they are not used one after the other. The audience will get bored watching you constantly cutting people in half.

Starting a show with this trick is also not recommended, because it is too slow to really grab the attention of your audience. This is a good closing trick, however.

One of the merits of this trick is that it is considered angle-proof. Don't perform this trick "in the round," though. Rather, this trick should concentrate on the cutting and the assembly and then get on with the show. There's no need to spin the halves around or to bring the halves too far apart. Dwelling on effects is a constant mistake made by many magicians, both amateur and professional. Once the trick is done, it is done. Move on with the rest of the show.

# Walter Gibson

## The Writer

Walter Gibson was many things to many people. To untold thousands of magicians and magic enthusiasts throughout the world, he was an authority on the history of magic, the most prolific author of books on magic and ghostwriter for all the greats in magic of the twentieth century, including Houdini, Thurston, Dunninger and Blackstone.

To still thousands of others who grew up in the thirties and forties, Walter Gibson was better known as the author of the most famous pulp hero of them all: The Shadow. This accomplishment gave him the distinction of having two totally different and successful careers, almost at the same time.

A prolific writer, Gibson's success with The Shadow series was unmistakably a tremendous success. From the book series, there was a radio show spinoff, The Shadow. This became the most popular mystery program of the time. It was necessary for Gibson to write up to six hours a day, five days a week, just to keep up with both the radio show and his comic strip. But Gibson made it look easy. Beyond both the Shadow and his writings on magic, Gibson also wrote books on a broad range of topics, everything from how-to and fix-it books to understanding ESP and the occult.

With this schedule, it is hard to believe he found time to perform magic. But he did. Although he never rose to fame as great as his mentors, his kindness, compassion and humor brought a charm and dignity to the art which was never really replaced at his passing.

Scores of books have been written or edited by Walter Gibson about magic. He wrote such books as the "Illustrated



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Book of Card Magic" and "Houdini's Fabulous Magic," as well as "Houdini's Escapes" and "Houdini's Magic."

Walter Gibson was, without question, the world's leading authority on magic, Houdini and the world of occult.

In 1977, Walter Gibson wrote a book called, "Mastering Magic: Secrets of the Great Magicians Revealed." In this book, he gave some astute advice on the disclosure of magic secrets.

"There are some persons versed in magic who hold to the erroneous theory that any disclosure of its secrets may cause the art to suffer. This is soundly refuted by the fact that ventriloquism was once as secret an art as magic; indeed, it depended even more than magic upon the creation of illusion. Today, everyone understands the basic operation of a ventriloquial figure, yet ventriloquism has soared to heights of popularity exceeding the wildest fancies of a generation ago. This is because the factors of understanding and appreciation are definitely linked by persons who witness a display of true artistry."\*

Gibson explained that it is not recommended to disclose your secrets right after performing them, but that the sharing of the secrets will only inspire more people to enjoy the pure entertainment of the art.

\* Excerpt from "Mastering Magic: Secrets of the Great Magicians Revealed." Published by Frederick Fell Publishers, Inc. New York. Copyright 1977. Used by permission of the publisher.

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## Linking Rings

The linking rings, also known as the Chinese Linking Rings, is one of the oldest illusions still in use today. There are many routines for this illusion, but I will concentrate on the basics of the illusion and not on a particular routine.

The performer is center stage, holding eight silver rings. Each ring has a diameter of ten inches. They are shown to be solid, without fakes or openings.

The performer then causes the rings to link and unlink right before the eyes of the audience. Often a spectator is brought on stage to help the performer. The rings will link and unlink right in the hands of the spectator. The spectator at all times has full control of the rings. Once they are linked, the spectator can only unlink them at the command of the performer, and can only re-link them in a similar manner.

The audience is always amazed and delighted as the rings seemingly melt into each other, then slip apart. At the illusion's close, all eight rings are seen to be completely linked together.

◆ **THE SECRET:** This illusion is misdirection at its best. First of all, you begin with eight rings. The eight rings are held in the following order: two single rings which are not faked and are separate from the others and each other, then two rings which are permanently linked together, and three other rings also permanently linked together. The eighth ring is the key ring. This ring is not solid, it does not form a complete circle or band. Instead, there is a small space cut into the circle. This opening allows other rings to link up or unlink from the key ring.

When first showing the rings to the audience, let them fall from one hand to the other. As they fall, count them. You must keep both hands close enough together so the linked rings will not show. This will be easily covered if you keep your hands close together.

With all the rings counted, have all the rings distributed on one arm. The rings will be in the following order (from hand

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to elbow, on your arm) single ring, key ring, single ring, double-linked rings, triple-linked rings.

To perform the illusion, take the first two rings and show them separately. Then group them together. These rings will be the key ring and a single ring. Remove the next ring, also a single ring, and link it to the key ring. Now you hold the key ring and two attached single rings. The rest of the rings are still in the crook of your arm.

Remove the two single rings from the key ring and hand them to a spectator, who is asked to link them together. As you do this, you place the key ring onto your arm, then remove it along with the double ring set, keeping the rings together.

Because the spectator will not be able to link the rings, you will take them back. You now have in your hand two single rings, the key ring and the double linked rings. Explain to the audience that the spectator did not say the magic word. Return the two linked rings to the spectator, and have the spectator hold them together over his or her head. Meanwhile, you take the key ring and a single ring and show the spectator how to hold them, holding them over your own head.

Say the magic word and suddenly your set and the spectator's set are now linked. Of course you can unlink your set while the spectator cannot, because you are using the key ring.

Continue with this type of routine while linking and unlinking the rings and constantly confusing the audience with the rings being linked or unlinked. For the finale, the performer will have the spectator return all rings and will then link all other rings to the key ring.

Rings come in all sizes in local magic shops. Or, you can go to your local craft store and purchase needlework rings. They come in many sizes and colors. You can have anywhere from three rings to twelve rings or more. Many craft shops will be able to spot weld these rings in the required groups.

Silver or gold are the best ring colors because they will shine and glimmer in the spotlighting of a stage.

There is also a mechanical key ring available at magic shops which can be examined by the audience. It works the same as the normal key ring, but the opening is closable and lockable.



This will make for more magic and mystery with the rings because members of the audience will be able to handle all the rings.

Even though this trick is an old one, it always fools the audience when done smoothly and professionally.

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## Sword Cabinet

A sword cabinet, also known as a sword box, was one of the first tricks to use mirrors.

A large box is wheeled to the front of the stage. The front of the box is opened for all to see. Into the box steps an assistant who takes up most of the space in the box. The doors are closed and the performer begins to thrust swords through holes into the box. When there seems to be no more place for swords, the box is opened. The audience can see all the swords, which fill the box from every angle, but the assistant now has vanished. The doors are closed, the swords removed. Then the doors are opened and the assistant is back, completely unscathed.

◆ **THE SECRET:** The box should be constructed large enough to fit the average assistant. The box's interior is painted either flat black or with a background using a repeating design. On both sides of the box, hinged to the sides, are mirrors. The mirrors are the key to this trick. The mirrors are hinged inside, near the rear of the box and extend from the top of the box to the bottom. When the assistant gets into the box, the mirrors are flat against the sides of the box. Once the door to the box is closed, the assistant then swings the mirrors away from the walls of the box and brings them together in the center. Because the mirrors are reflective (they reflect the sides of the box), the box looks empty to the audience. One of the swords, when inserted down through the top of the box, will hide the line where the mirrors meet from the audience. When the door of the box is opened, the assistant will be hidden behind the mirrors and will appear to have vanished. Then



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the doors are closed and the swords removed. The assistant swings the mirrored doors back against the cabinet walls, then magically emerges when the performer opens the outer doors.

Swords used in this illusion can be of all sizes and shapes. They are thrust into the box in such a manner that the shorter ones are closer to the mirrors and the longer ones are farther from the mirrors. Because there are so many swords of various shapes and sizes, and because the performer is working quickly, the audience is unaware that the swords are being inserted in any type of pattern. The reason for the pattern is simple. Those swords going into the back of the cabinet are all equally short, anywhere from six inches to three feet, so they won't jab into the assistant, who is hidden from the audience behind the mirrored doors in the box.

You will want the box to be on wheels. That way, as the swords are going into the box, you can turn the box around and around as you apparently shove the swords haphazardly into the box.

Swords can be made of wood or acrylic. Shiny swords are good for making this illusion more stunning. As each shiny sword is waved in the air, the blade catches the light and heightens the attention of the audience.

The openings for the swords should be just as large as the swords themselves. Some light entering the box is okay. With too much light the trick may be given away, because the light entering the box from the sword openings may reflect off the mirrors when the doors are opened. If the audience sees that reflection, they will understand the trick.

In illusions such as this one, have the box panels manufactured with hinges, rather than nailing or screwing them together. That way the hinge pins can be removed in order to dismantle the illusion, so it can be transported to the next venue. Remember, you need to move the tricks from place to place, so all tricks should be made to be easily dismantled. To make the crate look less obvious as a trick, you can place some stickers from foreign countries on the outside. However, don't bring too much attention to your props. The doors should have some sort of latch on them. This will keep them closed when you are moving the box and when you are inserting the swords.

## Walter Gibson

**A FINAL TIP:** You don't have to use swords. You can use brooms, golf clubs, baseball bats, or anything which will seemingly fill all the space in the box. Be imaginative and creative.



# Mark Wilson

## The New Magician

Even the most casual glimpse into the world of Mark Wilson reveals a man defining frontiers for this ancient art. By pioneering magic in the sixties on his own five-year network television show, "The Magic Land of Alakazam," Mark attained the distinction of being seen by more people than any other illusionist in the 3,500-year history of conjuring. Mark's North Hollywood facility currently houses the largest collection of magical props and illusions anywhere in the world. And the Mark Wilson Course in Magic continues to sell well, with national advertising in both print and television.

In July 1977, Mark was named a "Superstar of Magic" by the Society of American Magicians at the largest convention for illusionists ever brought together. Mark is also the only member of this profession to have twice been named "Magician of the Year" by the Academy of Magical Arts, which is magic's equivalent of winning an Oscar.

Mark's career began when he was eight years old. With a deck of cards and a Thurston book on magic, Mark was already practicing sleight of hand. At thirteen, he began working in a magic shop in Dallas, Texas, his home town. He soon became the shop demonstrator and main salesperson. Soon after that achievement, he began performing local shows.

Mark continued school and went on to graduate from college as a business major. His dream of becoming a magician never wavered, though, and he continued performing all throughout his college years. Then he used his business sense and education to embark on the road to success. Packaging television magic shows, he was able to get sponsors right out of college.



## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

His first show was called "Time for Magic." Then came "The Magic Land of Alakazam." He has also done many television specials. In addition, he teaches many of Hollywood's actors and actresses the art of magic. When NBC aired the television show, "The Magician," with Bill Bixby, it was Mark who taught Bill how to perform magic and consulted for the hit series.

Mark usually performs with his wife, Nani, and his son, Greg, who occasionally joins Mark on the set with some masterful sleight-of-hand artistry using cards, rope, coins and billiard balls. Mark also illustrates a form of magic which should appeal to the fantasies of every member of the audience: He produces dollar bills—quite a feat in these inflationary times.

In Mark's recent series of magic shows, which range from card tricks to apparatus illusions, Mark and Greg coordinate their appearance as well as their disappearances. They perform with Nani in fashion-coordinated costumes. Nani assists Mark in such classic illusions as the levitation, the stack of boxes and the locomotive-like apparatus in which Nani is locked, then cut in half, a unique version of sawing a lady in two. It's quite a moment when Mark separates the train and positions Nani's head so that she can watch her toes wiggle across the room in the other half of the separated apparatus.

Greg Wilson now performs on his own. Greg calls his show a "Horror Illusion" show, something like Alice Cooper meets Doug Henning.

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## Sword Suspension

Unlike the other suspensions, the sword suspension has an element of danger and daring added to it. The performer shows three large saber swords to the audience. Each sword is razor sharp and three feet long from tip to tip. The sword handles are placed into openings on the stage, point up. They are side by side, no more than one foot apart.

An assistant is brought onto stage and seemingly hypnotized, then lifted off the ground and laid back against the tips of the swords. Two of the swords are then removed, leaving the assistant suspended by one sword which is pointed directly into the nape of her neck.

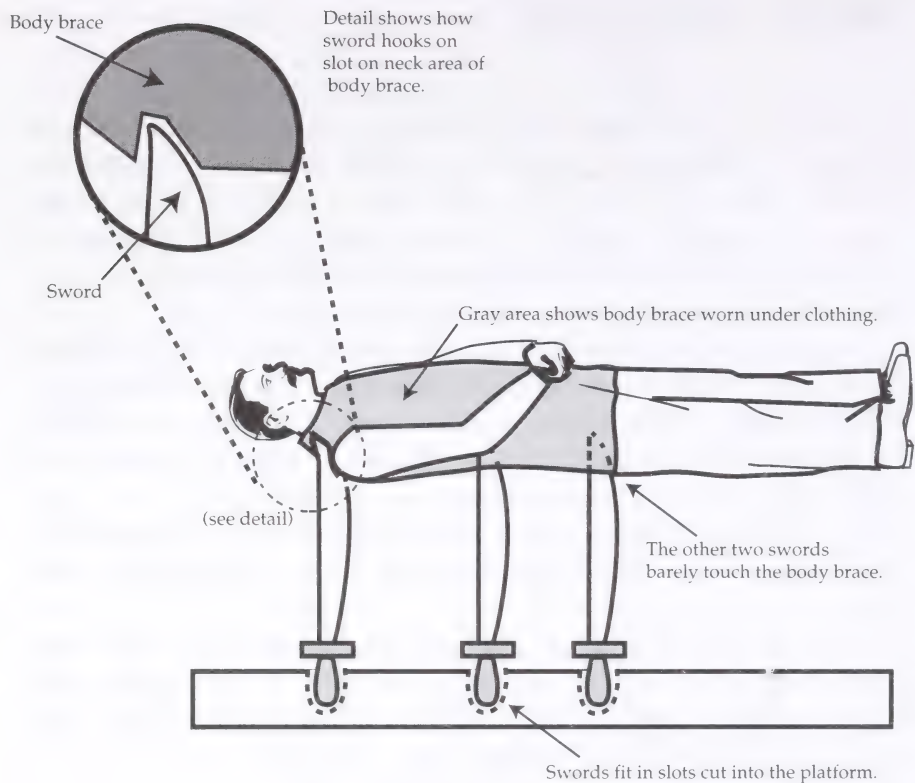
Of course, a hoop can be passed all along the assistant's body and down around the sword to prove there is no trickery.

The two other swords are then replaced. The assistant leaves the stage and the swords are then removed from the stage. In some cases, the performer uses the swords in whatever the next bit of magic may be.

◆ **THE SECRET:** The swords are real enough. In fact, they are real tempered steel. The swords are placed into slots in a board which is resting on the stage. In some cases, a small platform is used instead of the board. Each sword fits into a spot for the handle, so the sword will point straight up. The sword, which will be at the assistant's neck, is slightly larger and has more of a hook to the point area than the other two swords. These differences are not highly noticeable to the audience from any angle.

The assistant is wearing a body brace hidden under clothing. The brace runs from the neck of the assistant to just above the thighs. At the neck area of the brace there is a slot. When the neck sword is slipped into the slot, the two form a very secure hookup which allows this effect to work. Meanwhile, the other swords do not touch the assistant. They may touch the brace at some points. In addition, as in other suspensions,

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a hoop can be used to show that there are no strings attached to the assistant.

Placing the assistant on the swords takes at least two people. It is necessary to place the assistant down on an angle in order to catch the neck into the slot. Once the slot is engaged onto the sword, the assistant is lowered to a right angle to the sword.

The main sword is usually heavier and larger than the others, but for all practical purposes each sword is free of anything suspect. It is for this reason that often the performer will use the same swords for another effect, such as a sword cabinet.

All props can be made inexpensively at a welder's yard. Strength is the most important factor for the main sword (neck sword), the harness hookup worn by the assistant, and the platform into which the main sword is hooked.

The assistant often wears a flowing outfit to best hide the harness brace. With care, even regular street clothes can be worn. Once again, in order not to give the illusion away, try not to look too suspect, such as the assistant walking stiffly because of the brace.

This illusion, too, is great for performing in the round, on television, aboard ship, or just about anywhere a magician can perform.

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## Needle through Balloon

This trick is used primarily in comedy magic.

The performer has a large balloon blown up by a member of the audience. A large, sharp needle is then stuck into the balloon, but the balloon does not break. The needle, with a ribbon through its eye, is then pushed right through the balloon and out the other side. The ribbon too, is seen to pass through the balloon. Then the balloon is tossed into the air and the same needle pops the balloon.



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◆ **THE SECRET:** Sometimes it's magic, sometimes it's science, but the illusion must always be given a good performance. The needle is a fifteen-inch industrial needle. From the tip of the point, which is very sharp, the diameter of the needle gradually increases to the end.

Use ten- to twelve-inch-diameter balloons. The good thick ones are the best. Make sure you do not use too much ribbon or a type which will bunch up as it passes through the balloon. You may have to experiment with different types to find the kind that will work for you.

While the balloon is being blown up by a spectator, take the needle and nonchalantly clean it with a cloth. The cloth has been carefully soaked with a household lubricant such as sewing machine oil or WD-40. Get the needle all oiled up. Do not bring attention to this move. The audience will make its own decision as to what you are doing. Most people will think you are just cleaning the needle, which you are.

The balloons chosen have a very thick neck and center point. Such balloons can usually be found in magic shops. Slowly stick the needle into the thickness of the center point. Then continue to push the needle towards the thick part of the neck, just next to the location where the balloon has been tied off.

The shape of the needle, coupled with the oil, will keep the balloon from bursting and will normally seal itself enough so that not too much air will escape. The ribbon, or thread, will simply follow the needle on through the balloon without any harm to the balloon. Then, when you strike the midsection of the balloon against the point of the needle: Bang!!! There goes the balloon.

Because this trick depends on science, it may not work every time, so keep an extra balloon or two on stage when you perform this trick. If the balloon breaks, you may try the trick again.

Watch the faces in the audience when you first begin to penetrate the balloon with the needle. People really do get anxious that the balloon will burst.

# Doug Henning

## Magic of the Seventies

He was called "The Wizard of the North." He was the first and only magician to gain a Canadian government grant to study the art of magic. With this grant in hand, Doug went off and studied with the greatest magicians of the time.

He rose to fame quickly with a major stage production in Canada. His long-running "Magic Show" on Broadway catapulted him to superstardom.

Doug first became interested in magic as a young man in Winnipeg, Manitoba. While watching the Ed Sullivan show, Doug saw a magician levitate a young woman, and from that day forward he wanted to become a magician. In fact, Doug continued his fascination with levitation into his professional years by always levitating someone in his shows. Later, as a student of Transcendental Meditation, he would have a great interest in Yogic Flying, another form of levitation.

A boy eager to learn, Doug read all he could find on magic and related subjects. During his university years, he wrote his thesis on a subject related to magic: hypnotism.

His style was simple: When Doug would first come out onto the stage, the audience might think he was a lost stagehand. He was dressed in blue jeans and a tee shirt; his hair flowed to his shoulders. This young, buck-toothed illusionist would burst out and surprise the audience with his charm and wit, greeting it with a big "Howdy, folks."

Doug's first Broadway style show was called "Spellbound." The show was a collaboration between Henning, Ivan Reitman (later of "Ghostbuster" fame) and music writer Howard Shore. The show opened on December 26, 1973 and ran for almost a

## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

year. It was built around a series of magical illusions held together by a loosely-written story line. During the course of the two-hour show, Henning would thrust neon lights through his assistant, have knives dropped through himself, balance another assistant on the tip of a sword and change yet another assistant into a tiger. Beyond these large-style illusions, Henning would also do a card trick or two, as well as linking rings and a mind reading trick. The costumes were tacky, the show not too polished, and the script and actors quite amateurish. Even so, the magic styling of Doug Henning kept the show fast and fun.

The venue also helped. The theater in which "Spellbound" was performed was the prestigious Royal Alexandra, owned by Ed Mervish, a wealthy Canadian entrepreneur. The bright and elegant theater was the perfect spot for this Broadway-style show, which was a great success. When it moved on to New York City it was retitled "The Magic Show." The newly-organized show went on to more than 1,900 performances at the Cort Theater and became the fifth-longest running Broadway musical of the seventies.

Doug is most recognized for his version of the Zigzag Girl. This illusion places a woman in a transparent box the size of a telephone booth, then cuts her into three pieces. To make the illusion even better, the middle piece is moved away from the rest of her body.

Doug Henning retired from magic in the early 1980's to follow his devotion to Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, and to create for him giant theme parks to be called Maharishi Veda Land.



## Zigzag

Doug Henning popularized this illusion in the early nineteen seventies when he began touring with his assistant.

This one illusion had so much impact on the public, that magicians had to include it in their show, or the audience would be disappointed. In the illusion, a tall box about the height of the magician's assistant is wheeled to center stage. The box is visibly in three equal sections. The drawing of a young lady is depicted on the outside of the box, with openings cut out at the level of her face, hands and right foot. Small doors are located on the front of each section.

When all three doors are open, the entire box can be clearly seen as being empty. Through the open doors steps the assistant. The doors are closed upon the entry of the assistant but the audience can clearly see her whole face through the doors' small opening. She also extends her hands through the handholes and her toes through the footholes. Wide steel blades are then inserted into the front and pushed to the back. One blade is inserted between the first and second section, then the other blade is inserted between the second and third section.

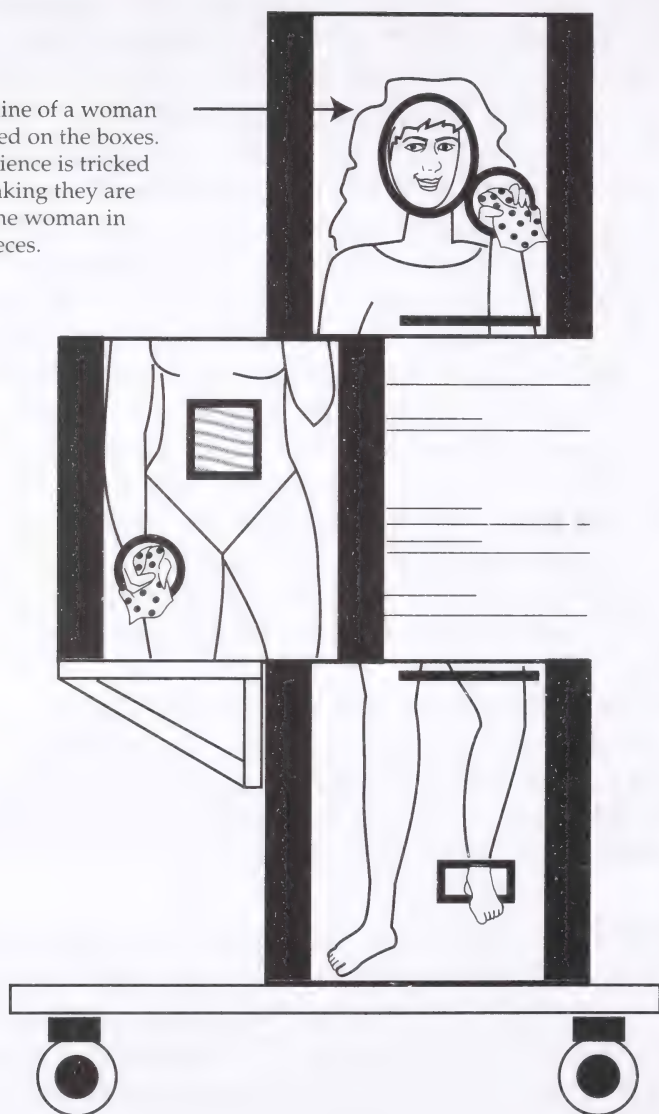
The assistant now is cut into three equal pieces. To make this illusion even more amazing, the performer slides the middle section completely to the right of the assistant. All the while, the face, hands and foot of the assistant continue to be completely visible to the audience.

◆ **THE SECRET:** This effect is more of an optical illusion than anything else. Yes, the assistant's hands, foot and face are real. It is the box that is strangely built. When the middle section, or box, is moved to the right of the assistant, a special section of the box moves with it. This special section is an extended part of the box. The box looks like it moves completely to the right, when in fact it only moves about five inches to the right. The edges of the illusion are painted black, and this border color hides the fact that the box has not moved that much.



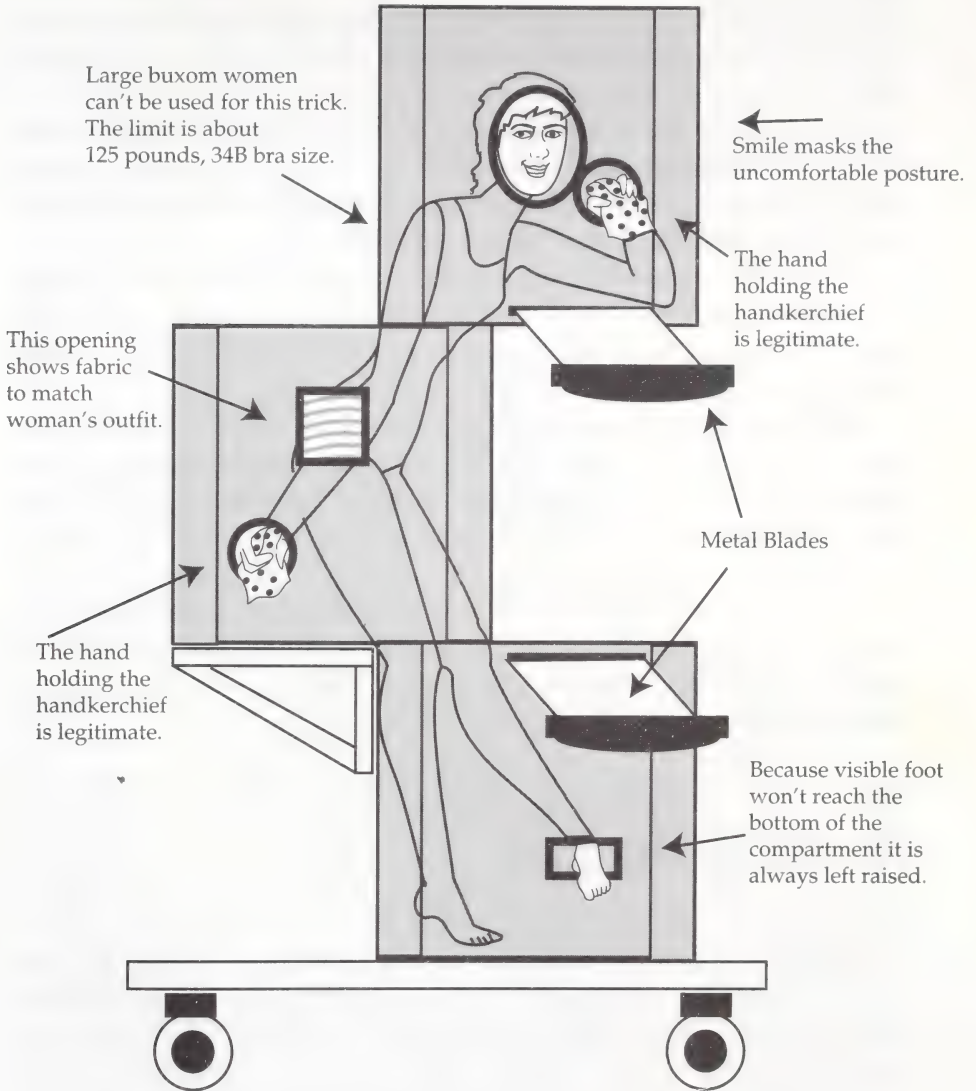
## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

The outline of a woman is painted on the boxes. The audience is tricked into thinking they are seeing the woman in three pieces.



# Doug Henning

## How It Really Works



## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

The assistant is curled around the blades and the middle box. Although from the view of the audience such a position is impossible, for the assistant, the task is easy. The real point of the blades is to hide the inside of the boxes from the audience. The moveable box has a layer of black cloth material on the top and bottom of its section. This material moves along with the box, hiding the insides of the box and hiding the secret.

The uniqueness of this illusion is not so much how it works, but the fact that it can be done in the round. It is easy to use, easy to move and can be performed quickly and magically at just about any theater or stage setting.

The entire illusion is on casters, which allows for turning the illusion around to all sides both before, during, and after the trick has been performed, adding considerably to the confusion and amazement of the audience.

Many performers even add a change of clothes to this illusion. The assistant goes into the box in an evening gown and comes out in a bathing suit. Sometimes it is the magician who goes into the box and has the trick done to him by his assistant.

Don't let the simplicity of this illusion turn you off. It is a great illusion that has done marvelous things for magician's careers. This effect is definitely a great illusion and a real reputation-builder.

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## Mismatch Woman

Popularized by most modern magicians, this illusion is seen quite frequently on stage. It is simple to perform and can be shown in the round with an audience on all sides of the illusion.

A rectangular box, approximately five feet, five inches tall, is rolled onto the center of the stage. It is made up of four equal-sized boxes which are stacked one upon the other. The stack rests on a small, four-wheeled platform or pedestal.

The front of each box opens like a door. When all four doors

are open, the audience can clearly see into the empty box. The stacked boxes resemble a small telephone booth on wheels. Then the assistant steps into the box, the doors are closed and metal plates are inserted between each box, one at the bottom of each box and one on the open end of the box. Then the top three boxes are removed from the bottom one, then walked around the stage. When they are reassembled, they are put back in a different order. The doors are then opened to reveal the assistant's head where the feet should be, the feet where the legs should be, etc. Doors are closed, boxes removed, then reassembled in the correct order. Doors are then opened and the assistant emerges from the boxes whole and in a different outfit.

◆ **THE SECRET:** The top three boxes are removable from the bottom box, which is resting on a hollow, angled pedestal. From the audience's point of view, the base appears to be only a couple of inches deep. When the assistant first enters the boxes and is still visible to the audience, he or she steps onto two small steps within the bottom box. Once inside the box, with the doors closed, the assistant will step down off the steps into the base of the pedestal.

Then the assistant crouches down into the hollow of the pedestal and inside the fourth box. The other boxes are gimmicked with two doors: The door on the front that the assistant goes through and a small fake door on the back of the box. The second door (or back door) opens to an area which is only two inches deep, with a black background.

All four boxes have a real door in the front. The top three have a small faked or gimmicked door on the back of each box. Inside of each false door is a dummy part of a woman, dressed in the same outfit the assistant was wearing when she first stepped into the box. These body parts can be purchased at a costume shop, dressmaker's shop or window dresser.

The metal plates are inserted between the boxes to hide the fact that the boxes are empty. As the boxes are dismantled and reassembled, the audience won't be able to see into the boxes, a fact which makes this trick good from a distance of as close as ten feet.



## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

The base is fifteen to twenty inches in height, depending on the size of the assistant. This space may seem small, but assistants endure a lot in magic acts. The deeper the base, the more room for the assistant to crouch. The base slopes down to a 45-degree angle on all sides. Painted black, it is completely invisible to anyone not right on top of it.

The assistant wears tearaway clothes over another costume in order to emerge from the illusion in a new costume. When the assistant appears, the tearaway clothes are left in the base of the illusion. This trick can be performed by the magician and one or even two assistants. Removing the three boxes and spinning them around is part of the misdirection of this effect, because the audience no longer knows which door was the front and which was the back.

Spinning the boxes is essential because it confuses the audience. This is a good illusion which works better with music, rather than with talking and explaining the illusion as you go. That's because the illusion's movements are flowing and words interrupt the almost hypnotic effect.

From the audience's viewpoint, the assistant appears to have been taken apart and put together incorrectly. When her head is revealed in the mismatched form, he or she should smile and look around. Some magicians add movement to both hands and feet of the dummy parts. Once again, dummy parts that move are available or can be made by the magician. Because this illusion is self-contained, the magician can spend time with theatrics rather than worrying about mechanics. Whether this trick is used as part of a theatrical production or a stand-alone, it is a real crowd-pleaser. I also have seen this trick done reversing the roles of magician and assistant. Either way it is one of the best illusions available today.

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## Water Jet Suspension

Suspensions are a variation of levitations. In a suspension, the person does not rise, but rather stays in mid-air where he or

she has been placed by the performer. Levitations, on the other hand, rise from a specific point.

This suspension, although called the Water Jet Suspension, can be performed in many other modes. The jets or streams of water, however, give this effect a nice bit of misdirection.

The performer has a base wheeled out onto center stage. A switch is turned on and streams of water rise up from this base three feet into the air. There are many jets across the base, which is five feet in length and one foot deep. The performer then places chairs at either end of the base so that the backs of the chairs face both each other and the jets of water. Then a board is placed on the top of the chair backs just at the apex of the water jets' upward spurting (the board is optional). The water jets now will be seen splashing against the underside of the board before gravity pulls the water back down to the base.

The assistant is seemingly hypnotized and, with aid from another helper, the performer lays the first assistant on top of the board. Both chairs are taken away and a hoop is passed completely around the suspended assistant. The chairs are then placed back in their original position and the water is shut off. The assistant is released from his or her hypnotic state and gets off the board. The chairs are then removed and the platform is wheeled back off stage.

◆ **THE SECRET:** Today, this suspension is completely self-contained. In earlier models, the performer relied on wires from the ceiling or some sort of apparatus from behind a back curtain.

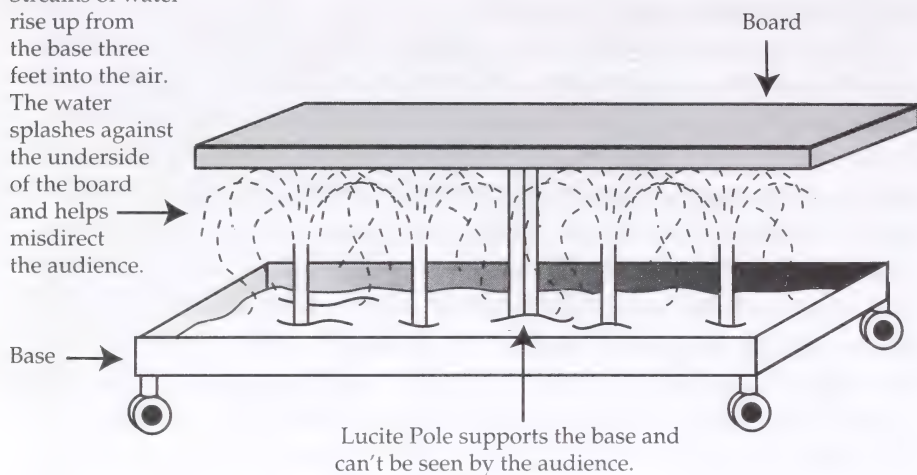
In this version, clear lucite plastic is used. If the performer employs the wooden board version, the lucite is a pole in the center of the water platform. Because the lucite is clear, the pole can't be seen by the audience. The board has a hole in its center which is engaged by the lucite when the board is put in place. The jets of water are only a distraction or misdirection for the trick. When the hoop is passed over the floating assistant, the water rippling over the hoop is a good show for the audience.

In order to pass the hoop over the board and around the

## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

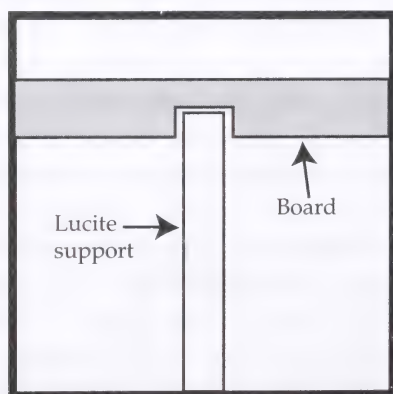
Streams of water rise up from the base three feet into the air.

The water splashes against the underside of the board and helps misdirect the audience.



Detail:

Lucite support fits into hole cut in the bottom of board.



lucite upright support, use a hoop which is three feet in diameter. Start passing the hoop at one end of the board. When the hoop reaches the center, sweep the hoop back over the path it has just traveled, then swing it in an arc to the other end of the board until the hoop is under the board. Move the hoop towards the end from which you started the pass and bring it up over the board again. Swing the hoop in the same circular motion again, then off the opposite end of the board. This movement is identical to the hoop movement in the S-Suspension illusion. This will appear to prove that there is nothing above, below or around the floating board. All the while the jets of water will be bouncing off the hoop and off the board making for great misdirection.

If you don't want to use a board, then the lucite support has a lucite board on its top in place of a wooden board.

When the streams of water are first turned on, they rise to a level one inch lower than the lucite board. Then, when the assistant is placed on the unseen board, the head and feet appear to be supported by the chair backs. Actually, his or her back is resting on the hidden board. Before you take away the chairs, have the streams of water spurting upward even more powerfully. This effect is done to reach the bottom of the board and the assistant. (He or she may get wet in this version, but that's show business.) The water then spurts even higher to enhance the effect of supporting the assistant when the chairs are removed.

After the chairs are removed, you can still pass the hoop in the same manner as before. Whether you use a wooden or lucite board, this suspension has a really startling effect on the audience.

**A TIP:** If you perform this illusion with the lucite board, don't shut off the streams of water after the effect is completed. If you do, some drips of water may continue to fall from the lucite board and give away the secret.

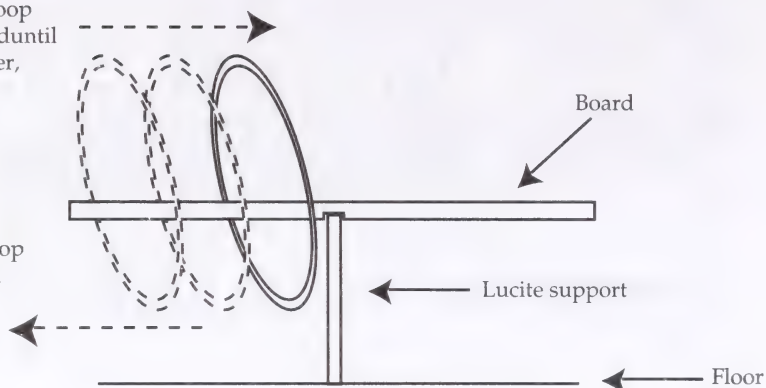
The platform board is usually made from plywood with casters. A drip pan is suggested on the platform in order to catch all the water that will be flowing. Keep in mind that some water is bound to get on the floor, too. This illusion,



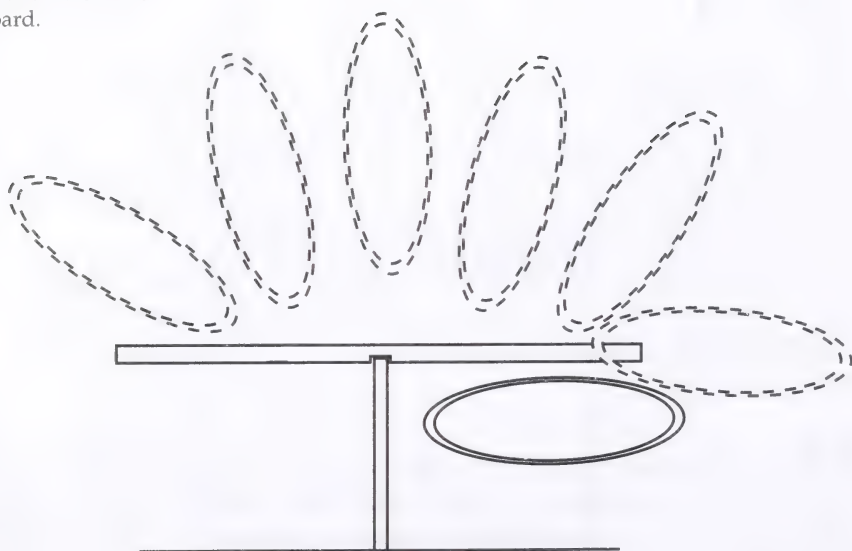
## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

1) Start passing hoop at one end of board until it reaches the center,

then sweep the hoop back over the path it just traveled.

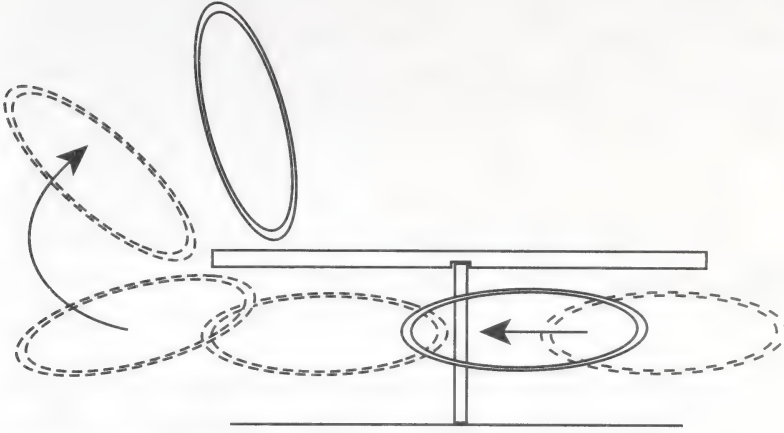


2) Swing the hoop in an arc to the other end of the board until it is under the board.

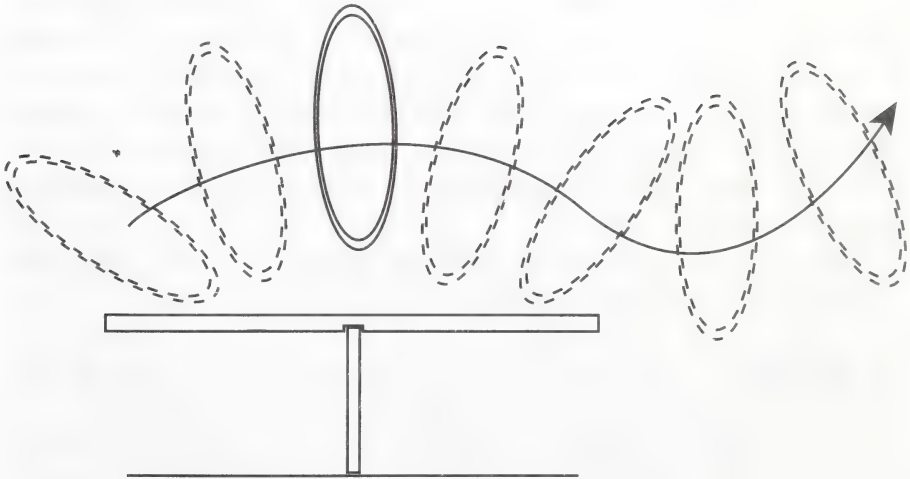


## Doug Henning

3) Move the hoop towards the end that you started the pass from and bring it up over the board again.



4) Swing the hoop in the same circular motion again, then off the opposite end of the board.



then, should be used as the closing effect: You don't want to perform any illusions on a wet staging area. On the board is a hose, the kind used to sprinkle yards, one with many holes. This hose allows the water to jet upward. You can either turn a handle on the platform base which will let the water flow, or you can have this done offstage. Either way, this trick needs no mechanical aids, just a hose and water supply to make it work.

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## Floating Ball

Whether you float a ball, a silk scarf or anything of this type, the illusion of floating in air is one of great beauty. This effect has many variations. Most stage illusionists have performed this trick in one way or another and credit their technique to Howard Thurston for his method, style and approach to this effect.

The effect in simplest form has an object the performer commands to float. The object, here referred to as a ball, will begin by resting on a table or in a cabinet. It then will float to the performer. Once in the performer's hands, the ball will float from hand to hand, as well as all around the performer. As the illusion continues, the ball will begin to float all across the stage, eventually floating out over the audience. The finale will have the ball vanishing in mid-air or into a cabinet on center stage.

Usually this illusion makes use of music while the ball seemingly dances about the stage.

◆ **THE SECRET:** This one is done with strings, as well as off-stage accomplices, special rigging and special cabinets.

Begin with the ball. Attached to it, by means of a small loop, is a very thin string called invisible string. This is string "A," and it runs up to the hardware store eyelets anchored in the stage ceiling, then off to the wings or backstage area.

A second string, string "B," runs through the loop on the

ball and continues farther along to another loop, which is held by the performer. This string also runs through eyelets to the off stage area.

The ball is usually exceedingly light and made of a highly shiny material. The high shine makes the ball very visible in the spotlight.

In my version of this routine, I secretly pick up string "B" by looping its end over my thumb. The ball is either hiding in a box on my table or simply sitting on the table. As I walk from the ball with "B" on my thumb, my backstage person slowly pulls string "A." Together the motion of the two strings causes the ball to slowly rise. Remember, I am slowly walking away from the rising ball.

When all eyes become misdirected as they watch the rising ball, I secretly loop string "B" over my shoulder, so now string "B" is looped on my left hand, runs across my shoulder, is strung through my right hand and then back to the rising ball.

At the point when the ball rises over my head, the backstage assistant begins to slowly release string "A." Gravity then lowers the ball between my waiting hands, as the ball slides down string "B."

Once the ball is in between my outstretched arms, I take hold of both strings in my left hand. Now the ball appears to be floating between my hands. At this point, I am free to make many movements and gestures while controlling the movement of the ball, which can be moved either up and down, side to side, or even to revolve around my body. The exact movement depends on how I control the strings.

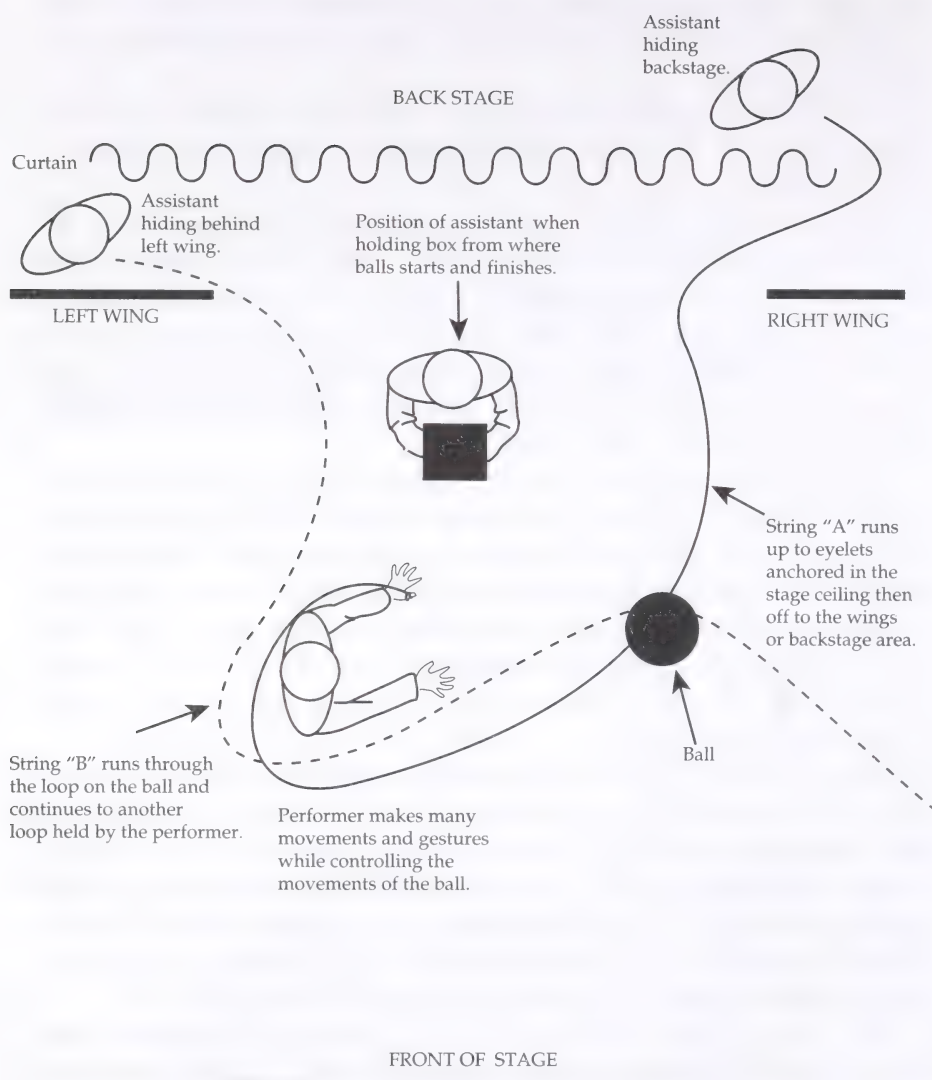
In general, think of the ball as a marionette and the performer as the puppet master. Because the audience is unable to see the strings, I can make the ball do just about anything.

When it is time for the ball to float up to the rafters, the effect is done with the aid of the backstage assistant. By pulling in his string, the assistant makes the ball rise above the performer's head.

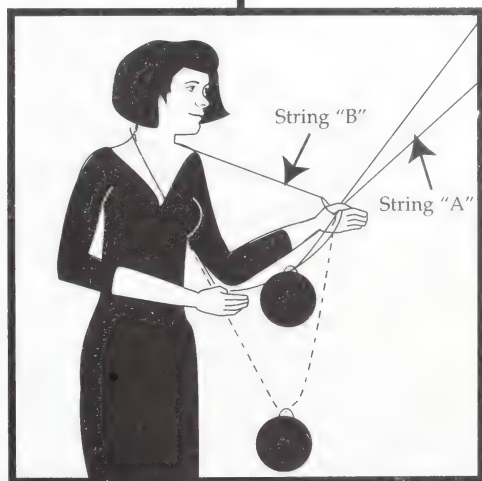
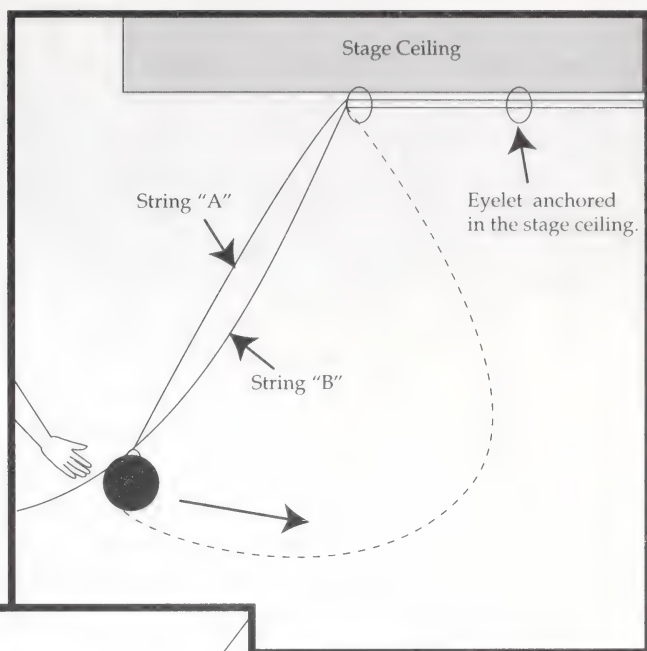
If the performer moves back even farther from the floating ball, the effect looks more impressive but also produces more slack in line "B." When the backstage person lowers the ball to two or three feet over the stage, the performer can begin to



# All the Secrets of Magic Revealed



# Doug Henning



## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

swing the string, and the ball swings out over the crowd. There are many choices for the finale. One is for the performer to have the ball float back to his or her hands. Then, with a quick movement, the strings can be broken off and the ball tossed to the audience. Other possibilities include having the ball float back into the box or onto the table from which it started or just float off the stage.

Howard Thurston made use of a spirit cabinet. This device is a large cabinet with doors on the front. The entire inside of the box is black. Hidden in the box is an assistant completely dressed in black and unseen by the audience. In the assistant's hands is a black bag or box. The performer moves the ball close enough to the assistant so he or she can catch and hold string "B." Then, with the help of the assistant, the ball floats into the seemingly empty cabinet where, once inside, the ball will be caused to vanish into the bag or box held by the black-clad assistant. Then the doors are closed and the trick is complete.

With the right lighting, staging and proper practice, this effect is marvelous, but it does take a great deal of work. Incidentally, this effect will only look magical in the right stage setting. Obviously it can't be done in daylight, outside, with a platform set up, and so on. The most effective setting is a large, deep stage such as Radio City Music Hall.

In fact the possibilities for performing this illusion now are limited. Back in the early days of magic, when vaudeville and big stages were at the peak of their popularity, this trick was very popular and effective. Today's performers will seldom have the opportunity to perform this effect because television will not do justice to it. The reason? Often the camera shows the strings.

Parenthetically, when I suggest string, consider black nylon sewing or fishing line. Be sure the line is very strong: One break and the trick is a complete mess.

# Kreskin

## Mind Reader

North Americans have been enjoying the magic, illusion and mind-boggling feats of extrasensory perception by the Amazing Kreskin for nearly thirty years.

Kreskin was born as George Joseph Kresge Jr. on January 12, 1936 in West Caldwell, New Jersey. He began his trek into magic when he discovered Mandrake the Magician comic books. By age eleven, Kreskin was already using "hypnotism" in his magic act.

In the late sixties and early seventies, Kreskin rose to fame with his ability to read minds, hypnotize his audience, and perform every other feat of mentalism in the book. Publicly, he never associated with magicians, but privately, he was proud to be among the ranks of magic greats such as Dunninger or Alexander.

One of Kreskin's most noted feats was his paycheck trick. Kreskin would leave the theater while under guard. Meanwhile, members of the audience would hide the envelope containing his salary check for that evening's performance. When Kreskin returned, he always managed to find the paycheck.

Although Kreskin never claimed to have ESP, he never denied it either, causing many magicians to take exception to the Kreskin show. Many magicians feel that anyone who performs magic-type tricks should let people know that they are a magician. At the same time that Kreskin was reaching his paramount levels of fame, a young man from Israel named Uri Gellar began to make headlines. Unlike Kreskin, Gellar did profess to having psychic powers. What happened next only added to the career of Kreskin. Because Kreskin had his own television show at the time, he would continuously prove



## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

that the stunts performed by Gellar were simple parlor tricks. All the while, Kreskin still would not tell the audience whether his own stunts were tricks or the real thing.

During Kreskin's zenith, his television show, "The Amazing Kreskin," was the most popular program in Canada. More Canadians watched Kreskin than "Hockey Night in Canada," the country's national sports program. Even today, Kreskin continues to perform on college campuses and in an occasional television program. His show is as dynamic now as it was twenty-five years ago.

I first met Kreskin after one of his shows in Toronto. Both myself and Doug Henning happened to be on stage after his performance to meet the great man. Kreskin was very impressed with the show "Spellbound," which Doug Henning was performing at the Royal Alex theater in Toronto.

Kreskin likes to call his performances experiments in extra-sensory perception, rather than feats of magic. That characterization he uses has always conjured up ideas of misdirection for his act, and people go into his shows already wondering if it is real or just trickery.

But, always the performer, the Kreskin show is consistently entertaining. He is so good at controlling the flow of the audience that he has actually left the theater on many of his shows and continued the performance via telephone or television monitors set up in the auditorium. During these remote feats, he would have people in the theater hide something or use any other number of experiments he may create. Then, while still outside the theater, he would reveal an envelope's location, contents, messages, and so on.

Kreskin has had his moments of resentment from other magicians, the most notable was his run-in with Joseph Dunninger. Towards the end of Dunninger's career, the one-time world's greatest mentalist attacked Kreskin for his usage of illusions. Dunninger claimed that most, if not all, of Kreskin's act was merely a copy of the Dunninger show. Kreskin shot back with a book which attacked Dunninger and gave away all the secrets of the older magician's trade. Kreskin has outlasted his rivals. Soon after the book, Dunninger passed away. Uri Gellar has since retired.

## Kreskin

In the end, Kreskin, full of energy, always witty and very gentlemanly, continues to amaze and fool his audiences. Although he does not perform as much as he did ten years ago, he still draws a full house everywhere he stages a show. In a recent telephone conversation, he told me he will continue to perform as long as he lives.

## Bag of Money

This effect gained great fame for the Amazing Kreskin.

The performer hands several paper bags (usually five), to members of the audience. Before doing so, he shows the audience that a one-hundred-dollar bill has been inserted into one of the bags. The performer concentrates, then asks the volunteers to set fire to two of the bags and return to their seats with the other two. One bag remains onstage. Of course, the \$100 bill is always found to be in the bag left on stage.

◆ **THE SECRET:** Once again, simplicity is the key to this trick, along with great stage presence and presentation. The \$100 bill actually is never placed into any of the bags. Instead the performer only pretends to put it in. The money has, in fact, been concealed in the performer's palm during the process of pretending to place the bill in the bag.

At the end of the trick, the performer takes hold of the remaining bag and violently tears it open while the palmed money seems to mysteriously emerge from the torn bag.

I have also seen this effect done in a comedy motif, where the performer will borrow a high-denomination bill from someone in the audience. During the trick, the performer will act as if the trick has not worked. He does this by tearing open the last bag and pretending to find no money inside. Then the performer asks the spectators who helped him to now open their handbags, search their pockets, and even look under their seats. Still no money.

At this point, the audience believes the money has literally gone up in smoke, only to have the performer recover the money from a pocket or behind an ear.

This effect works as above, except the money does not have to be palmed when the onstage bag is opened. A good way to get rid of the palmed money is to reach into a pocket for matches used in burning the stage bags.

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## Lock and Key

Another of the great mentalist-type tricks, this one can be performed with either a “spirit lock,” available at most magic shops, or with straight trickery.

The magicians ask eleven spectators on stage (or five, or however many you want up on stage with you). Then the performer gives a key to each of the spectators and has each one try to open a padlock that the performer gives them. They will find that only one key will open the lock.

Then the performer asks one of the spectators to come forward. This person is fully and completely chained up, then locked securely with the padlock. The spectators put the keys into a large bowl and mix them up. All but one of the keys are randomly removed from the bowl and put into a large envelope. The performer leaves with the envelope and deposits it into a mail box or bank slot.

When all is complete, the remaining key is handed to an assistant, who tries the lock and magically sets the spectator free.

◆ **THE SECRET:** The simplest method of performing this trick is the spirit lock. This lock has a mechanism built into it which produces the following results: Nine of the ten keys will not open the lock when they are first tried. The tenth key will open the lock, and, from this point on, all the other nine keys will work in the lock. Most performers use this method.

The other method uses two sets of keys. The first set of keys is handed to the spectators. None of the keys in the first set will open the lock. At some point, the first set of keys is switched for ten duplicate keys which all do work in the lock. One method of switching the keys is the spirit bag, which can be purchased at any local magic shop. The lock and keys can be purchased at any hardware store.

Either way you perform this effect, you will always come out as a real trickster. This one is great for stage, close-up, club, television, comedy, you name it.



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## Find the Paycheck

Another of the great mindreading tricks is the paycheck game of hide-and-seek.

The audience is invited to hide the paycheck of the performer. Basically, a member of the audience can hide the money anywhere he or she chooses. If the performer can't find the check, the money is forfeited. Often the performer will leave the stage or the building. It is just as effective to be blindfolded on stage, while facing the back of the auditorium, surrounded by a group of spectators from the audience. Meanwhile, someone has an envelope which has been handed over by the manager of the nightclub. Inside the envelope is the performer's nightly paycheck. The envelope can be hidden anywhere in the auditorium: It can go under a seat, in a spectator's purse, up in the air ducts, anywhere. There is no limit to hiding places. Wherever the paycheck is hidden, the performer is able to find it and fool the audience every time.

◆ **THE SECRET:** Once again, there are many techniques used to pull off this miracle. Often a performer will have several methods in place during each show. This way it becomes a safer illusion, because there is less chance of the trick failing.

Once the audience is convinced that the check is hidden well, the stage committee removes the blindfold from the performer. The person who hid the item then will join the performer on stage, while the committee members are thanked and sent back to their seats. The remaining spectator now walks with the performer in a challenging game similar to "Hot and Cold," only the performer does not ask how close to the envelope he or she is.

*First method:* A confederate has been placed in the audience before the show. Because the entire audience knows where the money is hidden, it is a simple matter of letting the performer know if he or she is close or not. While the performer moves about the theater, the accomplice uses a variety of signals to let the magician know where to go, until the performer is finally able to track down the envelope.

*Second method:* The person who either hid the money or the one who is walking with the performer is the accomplice. It then becomes a simple task to lead the performer around just long enough to build up suspense for the trick. In this instance, the performer may even be blindfolded, holding the arm of the accomplice while moving about the room.

In the second method, the performer can state—accurately—that no one among the spectators is an accomplice, even offering a reward if anyone in the audience is proven to be a confederate. Of course, the performer can make this statement truthfully at the time when the accomplice is up on stage and not present among the audience.

*Third method:* The high-tech method is becoming very popular with today's performers. Using a listening device such as "Whisper 2000," a helper backstage can listen to where the envelope is being hidden. Or, using a telephoto lens, again from backstage, a helper can watch the hidden envelope. Through the use of a wireless transmitter and a receiver worn by the performer, the information can be transmitted quickly and inconspicuously.

The use of method three can also be seen in acts when a performer comes on stage and is able to tell various people in the audience such information as their name. Other personal information can be picked up with such listening devices and used during the show. It's surprising to learn what people reveal about themselves before a show starts.

*Fourth method:* A trick known as "muscle reading." The performer will hold the arm of the one who hid the envelope. As he or she walks, the magician feels the individual's arm for voluntary contractions of muscles as the two of them close in on the envelope. Although this way is the toughest, the method does have an uncanny effect. Most people will find it impossible to stay calm while the search is taking place.

**A TIP:** Using more than one technique during a show will more than likely help ensure the magician's success, because it leaves less chance for error. This illusion obviously takes a great deal of time. You first must describe what you are going to do and why. Then you must get the committee up on stage with you. The act of hiding the check cannot be timed, be-

cause it is left up to the audience. Finding the check also takes time. I have seen this effect go on for forty minutes. If your entire show is this one trick, you may not have many bookings. As the finale, which is where this trick is best placed, you must make sure you leave yourself enough time. How will you know how much time is enough? It will take some trial and error for you to figure that out for your individual style and show.

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## ESP and Social Security Numbers

Magic performers always fool the audience when they are able to read thoughts of people in the crowd. Reciting someone's social security number continues to be one of the most popular tricks.

The performer takes to the stage and, with pad of paper in hand, begins to write down thoughts which are supposedly being transmitted to him from members of the audience. The magician calls out a person's name. That person stands, and the performer continues to talk about personal things about this spectator, facts which only a mind reader could know. The performer continues to surprise members of the audience while seemingly reading the minds of many in the crowd.

◆ **THE SECRET:** This trick is one which is simple to describe and even easier to perform. The real trick here is not to bore the audience too much as you read their thoughts.

The truth is simple: The performer doesn't know anyone in the audience, so there are no plants among them. He could not possibly know that much about each person. Even if the performer used a listening device such as Whisper 2000, not enough information could be gathered to make this trick hold up.

So how does the performer do it? Simple. The audience volunteers the information.



As the audience files in, whether in a nightclub or a theater, many people are handed a clipboard and pen. They are instructed to write down anything they wish to have “read” by the performer. They are told that the performer will never see the sheet which they have written nor will anyone else. Once they have written their innermost thoughts, they are told to seal the paper inside an envelope and keep it in their possession.

Instructions on the clipboard usually give the audience member ideas for items to write down, such as social security numbers, names of children and parents, birth dates, anniversary dates, etc. Writing down this information takes place long before the performer takes to the stage. Not all the members of the audience will be asked to be part of the experiment—that would just take too much time. After the clipboards and pens are recovered by the staff, there will be no further mention of the writings. In other words, when the performer takes to the stage, he or she will not thank those people for writing their thoughts down on paper.

At some point during the show, the magician will simply go into a mindreading routine. Those people who had the clipboards were also told that during this segment of the show they should stand if and when the performer mentions something they have written down. This way, they are part of the show. Everyone likes to be part of the show.

The secret is in the clipboards, which have a special function. Whatever is written on the clipboard paper is carbonized onto a paper in a secret compartment inside the clipboard. When the clipboards are collected, they go to the performer who now makes notes of several messages written down by audience members. The notes are written on the same pad the magician will take out into the act.

When the performer is supposedly receiving messages, telepathically, he or she is actually reading the messages written down by members of the audience. As simple a trick as this is, the impact on an audience is overwhelming. When done on a television studio audience, it is even more amazing to the home viewers, who have no idea that the same members



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of the studio audience whose minds are being read actually wrote down their messages earlier. The viewers at home just think the performer is reading minds and the people in the audience are so stunned that they automatically stand up when they hear the performer read their thoughts.

Most people will write their social security number because they think it is more difficult than having the performer guess their name. Others will try to fool the performer by writing incorrect information about themselves. The game is always won by the performer, who sees what is written before every performance. The people who wrote incorrect information look foolish, because the magician tells them exactly what they have written.

About 10 percent of the audience will get clipboards, but there will only be time to read the thoughts of half of them. Why not read them all? The magician can tell them that the spectators were not concentrating hard enough on what they have written. In reality, time constraints keep the performer from reading all the thoughts, but the performer will have asked all in the audience to think of things and will thank the entire audience for the extrasensory perception test. The performer will not say, "Those of you who wrote something down on a clipboard are to concentrate on these thoughts."

Why should the audience members write down their thoughts? If anyone asks, an assistant or the performer should say that the clipboard is to make it easier for people to concentrate on the messages they're sending to the performer.

Why did the audience members get to keep their messages? A souvenir of the show, of course.

**A TIP:** It is the astute performer who will make this act only a part of the show. There is much more to a performance than just reading minds. Much, much more.

# Kardeen

## The Next Generation

The early part of the seventies was the beginning of a rebirth in magic. The Amazing Randi was performing his Houdini-style escapes, Doug Henning was performing his "hippie" magic and Harry Blackstone Jr. was touring with his illusion show. A young man began his quest for magic stardom. His name is Kardeen. He dressed much like Henning, did the magic of Blackstone and the escapes of Randi. But Kardeen had a charisma which was all his own.

Although his age is a trade secret, when Kardeen first began appearing in and around Toronto, Canada in the early seventies, he appeared to be no more than twenty years of age. He began by performing for his classmates, then progressed to children's birthday parties. By 1972 he could be found performing at the Canadian National Exhibition, Ontario Place and other entertainment spots in and around Toronto. He wanted to move from children's magic to adult magic, and so he began to perform at bars, university pubs and adult parties. Eventually, he began to open for rock and roll bands across Canada and the United States.

In 1973 he was chosen to be the straight man for the ABC network's "Bozo the Clown" show. As the magician on "Bozo," Kardeen would tell jokes, work with Bozo and introduce cartoons. He would also have his own segment where he performed his magic for the television audience. During this period, later-to-be "Designing Women" star Delta Burke occasionally acted as his assistant.

With the success of "Bozo," Kardeen soon found he was constantly in demand. He performed all across the United States, Canada, South America, Europe and the West Indies.

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He opened for such performers as Tom Jones, Elton John, Genesis, and The Guess Who.

The year 1976 brought more fame when Kardeen became the fastest escape artist in the world by virtue of his 24-second escape from a regulation straitjacket, a feat recorded in the Guinness Book of World Records. The success of the straitjacket escape even qualified Kardeen to travel with the Guinness on Parade show, which performed all over the United States.

Later, Kardeen's own show grew to be one of the largest professional magic shows in the world. Not only did Kardeen perform his famous escapes, but he also produced and vanished women, tigers, airplanes and an assortment of other effects. His most renowned stunt was reportedly at Radio City Music Hall, where he floated an elephant across the giant stage. During this time Kardeen was one of the entertainment world's highest-paid performers, earning, at times, more money per minute than the average person made in a week.

By the end of 1977, Kardeen had fulfilled all his magical dreams. He performed daily, had a syndicated magic column and his own television show. He had done commercials, had his own line of magic products and a fan club. He had reached the pinnacle of his career. With great success in hand, Kardeen began to reevaluate his own life. He wanted to take some time for himself and see in what direction he would go. In the spring of 1978, Kardeen was playing a multi-week show at the Steel Pier in New Jersey. When the last show ended, Kardeen the performer was not seen or heard of again.

From 1978 until 1993, nearly fifteen years, Kardeen had not been heard from. As his contemporaries began to retire from magic, Kardeen began to yearn, once more, for the stage. Now Kardeen is trying to do the seemingly impossible: He wants to make a comeback into show business. Along with a book that he has written and a magic deck of cards he has invented, he is beginning the long road back to performance stardom. The final chapters on Kardeen have yet to be written. Watch for Kardeen and see history in the making.

Note: Kardeen is the stage name for the author of this book, Mr. Herbert L. Becker.



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## Straitjacket Escape

This trick undoubtedly was made most famous by Houdini. Over the years, many great magicians have used this escape as a means of attracting media attention to themselves. The Amazing Randi continued to use this escape in the best Houdini fashion during the late 1960's and the early 1970's. Kardeen, amazed the world in 1976 with a new twist on the escape. Rather than taking a long time to get out of the straitjacket, twisting and struggling to release himself, Kardeen escaped in a few seconds. Such a great change to the trick that the Guinness Book of World Records chose to add the speedy escape into the record books.

However, the escape is the same whether it's done quickly or slowly. Members of the audience are invited to the stage and can fully inspect the straitjacket. Most straitjackets have buckles on the back, sleeves without hand openings and a buckle with a strap on the sleeve ends. The performer is placed in the jacket and the rear buckles are fastened as tightly as possible. Then the arms are crossed in front of the performer and they, too, are fastened securely behind the performer's back. Some straitjackets also have a crotch strap, which is also secured. After all the straps and buckles are in place, the magician is able to pull free of the straitjacket in fairly short order.

◆ **THE SECRET:** While not all straitjackets are made the same, we will deal with the basic hospital supply house-style jacket.

That kind of jacket comes in three sizes: small, medium, and large. Make sure you try on the jackets to ensure proper fit. Not too tight and not too loose. When the back buckles are being tightened, don't just stand there, move around as you are being fastened. As your captors pull on the straps to tighten the jacket, move back towards them as they pull. Take small breaths and keep your stomach and chest expanded as much as possible. Your expanded chest and stomach will make it more difficult for you to be tied up too tightly to move. When they are through with your back and crotch strap, they



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will start on your arm strap. When they cross your arms in front of you, make sure your stronger arm is on the top. Resist as they are tying you in. Don't just stand there. Keep as much resistance as you can, without letting anyone know what you are doing, of course. Once they are done, have them step off to one side and take a bow.

When you are ready to begin your escape, start by moving your top arm up to your opposite shoulder. This is done by sliding your arm up the opposite arm and up to the opposite shoulder. To illustrate, if your top arm is the right arm, you will move the right hand and arm up the left side of your body. Then up onto the left shoulder. At this point, you must pull this arm up over your head. Don't resist with the other arm. Remember that the strap has them hooked together. If you are pulling with both arms, you won't get too far.

Once your arms are up over your head, you can reach down toward the top buckle on your back. Through the arm material your hands can grab the buckle and pull it free. Now, with the top buckle undone, you pull your arms down to your crotch strap and pull this one free, too. At this point you can pull the entire jacket off over your head, and you are out.

**ANOTHER POINT:** An alternate method is a gimmick straitjacket. Never use fake straitjackets. Why? Most fake jackets have secret ways to escape. Many magicians like to have the opportunity to have the jackets not only fully examined by the audience, but they also like to put a member of the audience into the jacket and let them have a go at escaping. If you use a fake jacket, the audience members will discover the trick. Also, fake jackets bought at magic shops can sell for as much as \$400. The real thing, available from hospital supply houses, can be as cheap as \$50. This decision is a no-brainer.

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## Woman to Tiger

This illusion has been shown on television and has been performed on the most famous stages in the world. A cage is

wheeled onto the center of the stage. The audience can see both through it and under it, because the cage is empty. A staircase is wheeled up to the cage and the assistant steps up into the cage. The assistant is clearly seen. The staircase is moved away as the cage is covered with a curtain. The curtain is then whisked away, and there in the cage is a tiger. Younger magicians can use a person in a costume, or have a cage of full clowns rather than a tiger.

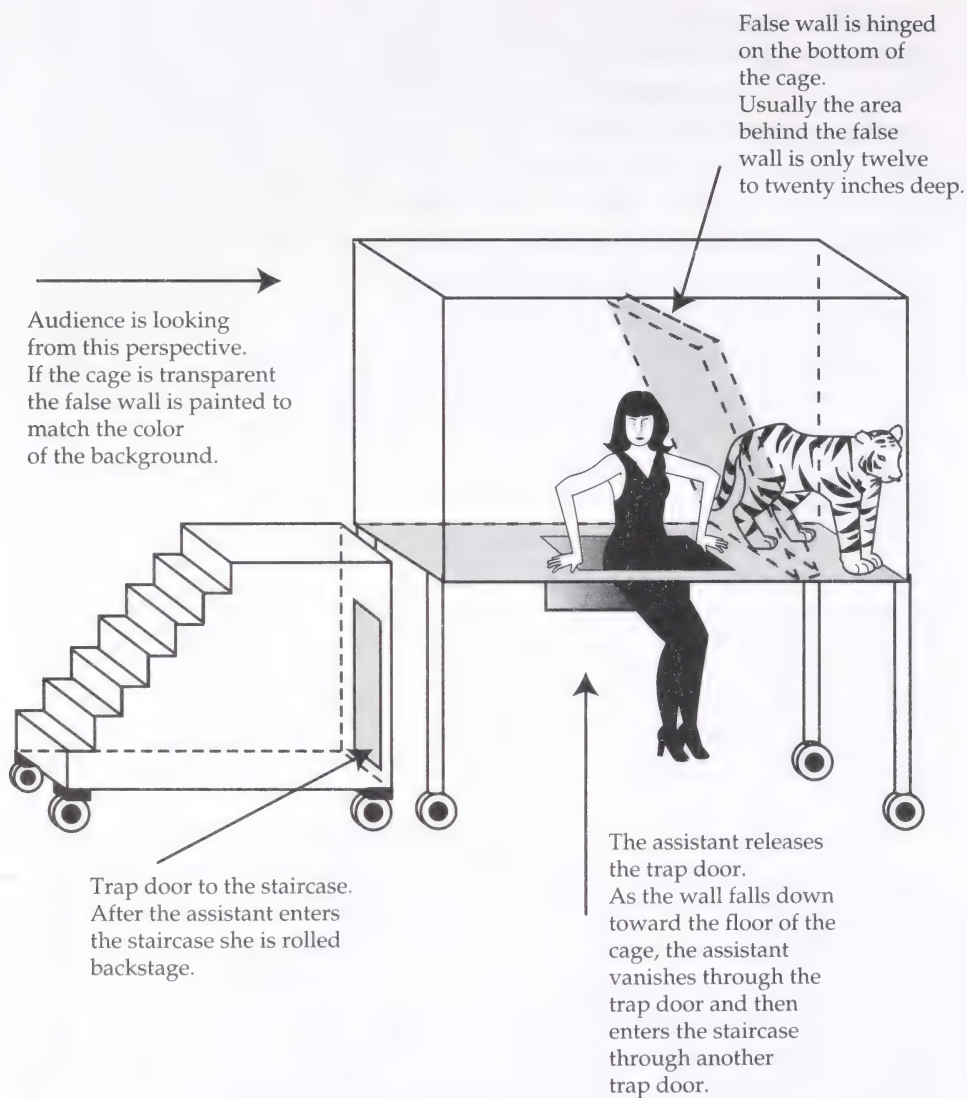
◆ **THE SECRET:** This effect is actually two illusions in one. The first is the cage, which is basically a box on wheeled legs. It can be built to resemble a cage or simply built out of metal and plastic and be completely clear. Either way, the trick works the same.

The cage is actually in two parts, the part the audience sees and a secret partitioned area covered by a false wall. When the illusion is brought out onto the stage, the stage curtain is resting on the very rear of the cage. Although the cage can be seen into, the audience actually is looking at a false wall in the cage painted the same color as the curtain resting on the back of the cage. Usually the area behind the false wall is only twelve to twenty inches deep.

The curtain only drapes down to nearly the bottom of the cage, so the audience really can see through the underneath part of the illusion. Behind this false wall is the tiger. There is also a trap door in the front part of the cage. Because the door is flat on the floor of the cage, it can't be seen by the audience. This door opens up into the cage. The assistant goes up the staircase and into the cage. The curtains are then pulled around the cage. While the curtains hide the cage, the assistant fully opens the trap door and at the same time releases the false wall, which still is between the assistant and the tiger. The false wall is hinged to the bottom of the cage. As the wall falls down toward the floor of the cage, the assistant vanishes through the trap door, escaping the cage and the tiger.

The second part of this illusion is the staircase. Although it seems to play a minor role in this illusion, it is the assistant's means of escape. The staircase is deceptively deep. The top of the staircase has in it a trap door which juts just below the trap door of the cage. The assistant leaves the cage through

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its trap door and enters the staircase through its trap door. Then the staircase is rolled away. All the while the audience is concentrating on the cage and not the staircase. Once off-stage, the assistant gets out of the staircase and gets ready for the next illusion. Often, people forget there was a staircase involved at all because it is on, then off, the stage so quickly.

In presenting this effect, it is a good idea to use the entire stage. Obviously, once the assistant has been hidden in the staircase the cage can be rolled all around the stage to show that the cage holds no secrets. The cage can also be wheeled right up to the footlights before the magician removes the curtain and reveals the tiger. Seeing the tiger where the assistant used to be is always a breathtaking effect. While the audience is admiring the tiger, the magician can walk all around the cage, proving to the audience that there are no mirrors involved in this great illusion.

A magician can embellish the effectiveness of this illusion. For example: When the curtain is whisked away from the cage, there can be an explosion and a burst of smoke. Firing off a starter's pistol just when other assistants pull the curtain away is another way of bringing on the tiger in a mysterious manner.

If you are using clowns or costumed people, rather than the tiger, it is a good idea to have at least two people making an appearance. If you only have one person appear, the audience may simply think that the first assistant simply put on a costume.

This illusion is theater magic at its best.

**A TIP:** Tigers and other trained animals are available from many animal actor organizations. The tigers are trained, tame, and work well in these kinds of effects.





# Siegfried and Roy

## Doing the Impossible

Las Vegas entertainment would not be complete without the masterful nightly performances by the talented pair, Siegfried and Roy, who put on a show so spectacular it dwarfs all others. Despite their meteoric success, the pair started from humble beginnings.

Siegfried Fischbacker and Roy Horn met in 1960, Siegfried was a cruise ship magic entertainer, while Roy was a steward on the same ship. Roy was fascinated by the magic Siegfried performed and became his friend. At the time Siegfried's show was a jumble of store-bought magic tricks.

Back home, Roy had a pet cheetah. Roy dared the magician to make the big cat vanish, then reappear, the same way the magician did with rabbits. Siegfried took the challenge. Such animals weren't allowed on cruise ships, but Roy managed to sneak the cat on board anyway. Siegfried and Roy practiced with the cat until the routine resembled a magic act. Although their routine was still unpolished, the tourists loved the show. The ship's captain did not.

The way the story goes, Roy was fired on the spot for breaking the rules. However, the show was such a success that eventually a permit was issued to allow the big cat on board ship, along with Siegfried and Roy, who were now performing as a team.

During the next five years, they added a lion and a panther to their show while they worked the cruise ship circuit out of Germany. During this time, Roy learned how to do magic and entertain an audience, while Siegfried became a great fan of the big cats. After working the cruise ship circuit, the team began to perform across Europe, appearing on many televi-

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sion shows and presenting their act before European royalty. Their use of big cats was unique, and caused quite a sensation everywhere they went.

Hearing that America was the capital of success, the pair packed their bags and headed for the United States. Success came quickly. Their act was now enormous, using many animals, lights, music—and magic, of course. Such a grand-scale show is a natural for Las Vegas, so they headed off to The Town That Does Not Sleep. Eventually they began headlining at the Mirage, where they have been ever since. To see their nightly act, patrons pay up to eighty dollars, nearly double the cost of most other Vegas shows. Even so, the show is sold out for practically every performance.

With good reason. Their show is filled with laser beams, amazing costumes, astonishing lighting effects, smoke, mirrors, and up to six large cats. The electronics are completely computerized. The dancers and other performers work on very precise timing throughout the entire show. Building their stage reportedly cost \$50 million and their performance contract is said to pay the team nearly \$60 million for five years.

In the show, Siegfried is looked upon as the magician, while Roy is considered the assistant. The pair, however, consider themselves as equal partners in the show. In fact, during one tour, they actually switched their roles as magician and assistant just for a change in pace.

Among their favorite tricks: the substitution trunk, tiger change to assistant, assistant change to lion, and the act of flying when Siegfried makes Roy float high into the rafters.

Siegfried and Roy have been performing together for more than thirty years, and their act at the Mirage continues to grow. Their future is even brighter. It may hold new tours, perhaps even television specials. For them, nothing seems impossible.

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## Removing the Middle

This illusion is popular with many of today's most successful magicians. It is kin to Sawing the Woman in Half as well as Mismatch Woman.

This illusion has been used with lasers and sometimes is used on the performer rather than the assistant. It is an interesting puzzle, no matter how it is done. A box similar to the Sawing a Woman in Two box is center stage. A person lies down in the box with head and feet protruding from opposite ends.

Side panels are opened to reveal the body profile of the occupant in the box. After large blades are inserted just below the neck and just above the ankles, the middle section is removed from the table. Then, to the delight of the performer, the feet and the head sections slowly begin to move towards each other until the feet appear to be growing out of the neck of the subject. All the while the feet move and the head can talk and smile. At the end, the feet and head return to their original ends of the table, the middle section is returned and the subject steps out of the box, none the worse for wear.

◆ **THE SECRET:** As with most magic tables, the table is not as thin as it appears. In this illusion, the subject enters the box, and uses his or her own feet to push out a pair of false feet which are constructed into the other end of the box. When these fake feet, which have been inside the box, are pushed, they then protrude out of the box, looking like the real person's feet. When the side panels are opened, the subject's arm is the only body part which really belongs to the person in the box. What appears to be the torso, the legs and feet are only make-believe. The real body of the subject drops into the table cavity, hidden from the audience.

Once the side doors are shut, the subject completely drops into the hollow of the special table. As the head and feet sections seemingly move together, the subject is actually sliding along a conveyer belt towards the fake mechanical feet. The feet are easily controlled by the submerged subject.



## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

Once all the sections are put back together, the assistant pulls the fake feet back into the box. This movement is covered by the side panels. Then the assistant steps out of the box to join the magician and both take their bows.

This is a great, angle-proof trick, similar to Mismatch Woman, while having a more modern look and feel to it. Most of the time, the subject appears to be uncomfortable during the “shortening” effect.

Don’t let the simplicity of this trick deceive you. It can really fool the audience.

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### Tiger to Assistant

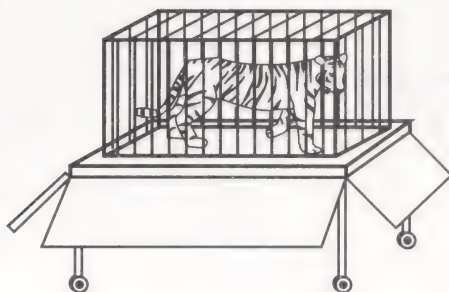
Although Siegfried and Roy do this trick in various ways, this version is the one most often used in tiger-to-assistant performances.

A cage is wheeled to the center of the stage. The cage rests on a wheeled base. The cage is just large enough to hold an eight hundred-pound Siberian tiger, snarling inside the cage. The cage is covered completely with a large cloth. Then boards, which are attached to the base, are swung up on all sides, hiding the cloth-covered cage. Once the sides are swung up and latched into place, chains which are hanging from the rafters are connected to the top of the cage. The entire cage, dangling from chains, is lifted into the air above the boards, leaving the base on the stage. The performer then whisks away the cloth, revealing that the tiger is gone and the cage is empty. In that same instant, the wooden boards forming the sides of the base fall open and out pops the assistant from inside the base. Moments later, the performer will pull a trunk over to the center of the stage. When the trunk top is thrown open, the missing tiger leaps out and onto the stage.

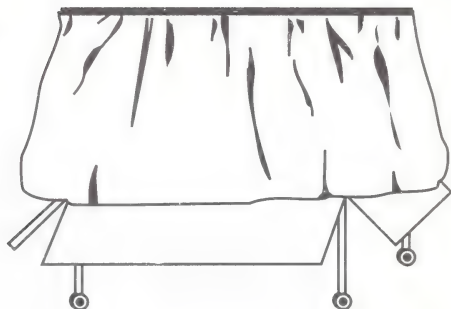
◆ **THE SECRET:** Similar to the tiger cage seen elsewhere in this book, this trick can be considered two tricks in one. First is the cage, which has two methods for vanishing the tiger. Many performers use the exit-off stage principle, which oc-

## Siegfried and Roy

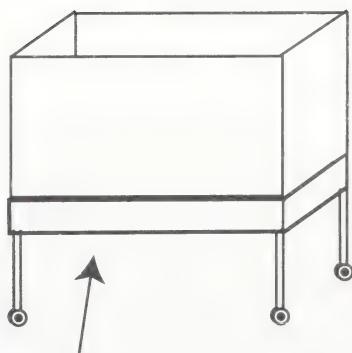
1) Tiger in cage.



2) Cage covered.

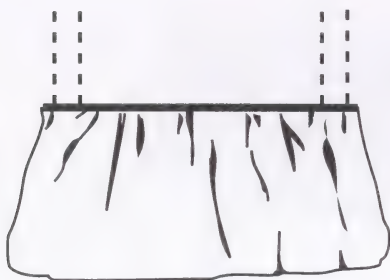


3) Cage is covered with boards from base.

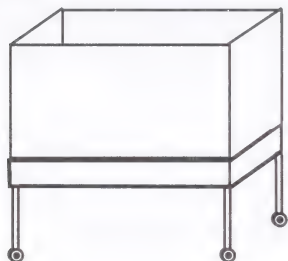


Assistant is hidden  
in secret compartment  
in base of cage.

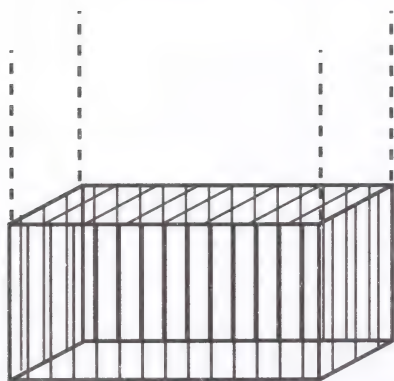
## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed



4) Cage in air.



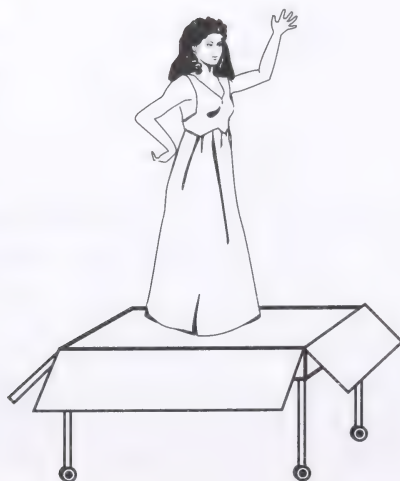
Once cage is lifted  
the assistant moves  
out of the hiding  
place behind the upright boards.



5) Tiger is gone.



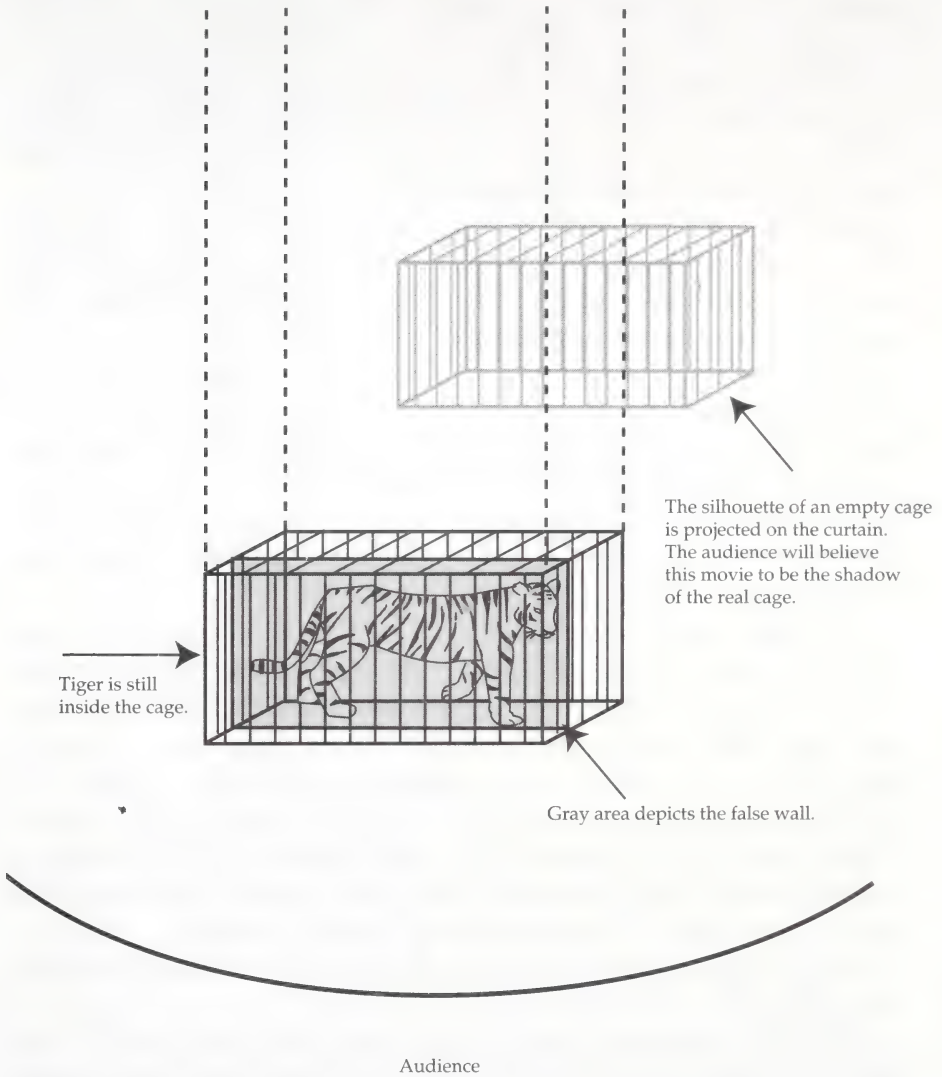
6) Assistant appears.



# Siegfried and Roy

(variation)

**Variation:** The tiger stays in the cage but is made invisible to the audience by a false wall inside the cage.





## All the Secrets of Magic Revealed

curs when the animal actually walks out the back of the cage and through the curtains, unseen by the audience. This occurs when the cage is covered: The back panel of the cage drops down to form a plank, or "drawbridge," which opens against the rear curtain. A small opening in the curtain allows the tiger to walk backstage.

All is covered from the audience by both the cloth draped over the cage and the movements of the performer bringing the boards of the base into place. When the cage rises into the air, the tiger is already long gone.

Another method is to use a false wall in the cage (see *Woman to Tiger*) which will hide the tiger from the audience once the cloth covering the cage has been removed. The audience believes the cage to be empty because it sees the silhouette of the empty cage against the back curtains. In fact the silhouette is really a projected movie being shown on the curtains. The cage still has the tiger inside of it, hidden from the audience with the false wall (see illustrations).

In either case, the tiger or a twin to the tiger is placed into the trunk, just waiting for the performer to bring it onto the center stage at the finale of this trick.

The base has a secret section, just below the surface. This secret section is made of black cloth, and is just large enough to hold the assistant. It is hidden from the audience because the base looks deceptively thin due to the wonders of chrome and black paint. What really happens is that the assistant is lying just below the surface of the base, being held in place by the black cloth. Once the tiger cage is lifted up off the base, and while the boards are still erect, the assistant moves out of the secret hiding place, behind the upright boards.

At the appropriate moment, the boards on the base drop away revealing the assistant.

While the audience is still applauding the appearance of the assistant, other helpers backstage push the tiger, now in the trunk, to stageside. The performer pulls the trunk to the center of the stage for the reappearance of the missing tiger.

If, instead, the tiger was hidden in the ascended cage, that cage is no longer visible because it is covered by curtains. The cage is now lowered behind those curtains to waiting hands

## Siegfried and Roy

which remove the tiger from the cage, place it into the trunk, then move the trunk to stageside.

Often, the performer will have bursts of smoke and flash when the cloth of the elevated cage is whisked away. The smoke and flashes would appear both in the air and at stage level for the appearance of the assistant.

This illusion must be performed on a specially-designed stage. The special design is for the chain pulley system which operates the rising cage.

Those in the audience on the far left or far right often see the tiger scampering out the back of the cage and through the curtain. But you can't fool all the people all the time. Most of the audience will see a great illusion.



# The Final Word

There is a great deal of controversy surrounding the highly secretive subject matter of this book. Yet even I was unprepared for the multitude of reactions I have encountered since word leaked out of its publishing. From disbelief to excitement, shock and outrage to curiosity and suspense, millions of magic fans and the curious public all clamor to learn how the most amazing and dazzling tricks are performed by the biggest magical stars ever.

The magic industry feels threatened by this book's publication. Magicians will feel their livelihood is at stake. But there are others who will recognize that disclosure of these secrets does not mean the end of the mystique surrounding magic. The audience's knowledge will be enhanced and thus people will be sure to fully enjoy the trick when it's performed.

This book was not intended to take adults who thought magic is *real* and then shatter their innocence with the disclosure that magic is a well-orchestrated *illusion*. No, this book was written to aid all of those who want to be able to say, "Oh, so that's how it's done."

In writing this book I have attempted to lift the veil of mystery and expose magic as a performance of skill rather than an art of secrecy. As quoted by Walter Gibson, "Magic should no longer be passed down from master to disciple." It is also my sentiment that surreptitiousness will neither enhance nor glorify magic, but keep it in the Dark Ages.

Contrary to popular belief, there is no true "magician's oath of silence." Today is the age of why and how. People want to know. This book is meant to be the ultimate book on magic and its secrets. Much has been said about this book and its concept, both for and against. I would like to hear from you. What is your opinion? Drop me a line to tell me what you think about magic. If there are any other tricks or illusions which you would like to know about, do not hesitate to ask. I will be happy to enlighten you further on . . .

*All the Secrets of Magic Revealed*

Herbert L. Becker

c/o Lifetime Books, Inc.

2131 Hollywood Boulevard

Hollywood, Florida 33020





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